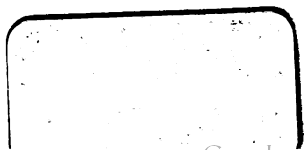

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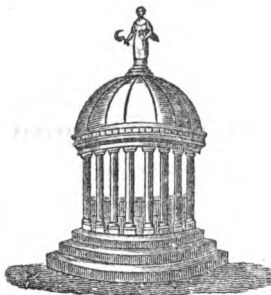




RECOLLECTIONS
OF A
BLUE-COAT BOY;

OR, A VIEW OF
CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

—
' Gay hope is theirs, by Fancy fed,
Less pleasing when possess'd;
The tear forgot as soon as shed,
The sunshine of the breast.'



[ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.]

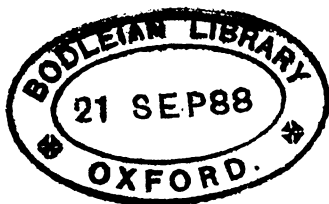
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DEDICATION.

TO ELIA, whose lively pen has so vividly depicted the character of Christ's Hospital, the following pages are dedicated, gratefully and respectfully.

PREFACE.

The following pages have been drawn up from the writer's recollection, occasionally assisted by a neat little compilation, called, *A Brief History of Christ's Hospital from its Foundation by King Edward the Sixth, to the Present Time.* To this history the writer is indebted for those lines which conclude the volume; and, while he makes the acknowledgment, he begs to return his thanks for the assistance which he has derived from that work.

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THE BLUE-COAT BOY.

CHAPTER I.

GEORGE. You have often promised us, papa, that you would give us a history of your school-days, when you were a Blue-coat boy. The evenings are now quite long enough ; suppose you begin to-night.

FATHER. Most willingly, my dear boys, if it will afford you any pleasure.

ROBERT. I am sure I should like very much to hear it; but I cannot think how you can remember things that happened so very long ago. How many years is it since you left Christ's Hospital?

FATHER. It is twenty-six years since I left the school, and thirty-four since I went into it. When you are thirty years older

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you will not think so much of that distance of time. Besides, my memory has been often refreshed by meeting occasionally with my old school-fellows and talking over past times.

GEORGE. And is the school exactly the same now as it was when you were there ?

FATHER. For the most part I believe it is. There have been some few alterations, which are great improvements ; but the general character of the establishment remains the same. I suppose you have read enough of the History of England to know that Christ's Hospital was founded by Edward the Sixth.

ROB. Yes, I read that in the history that we have at school. Christ's Hospital was founded by Edward the Sixth on the dissolution of the monastery of the Grey Friars.

FATHER. And formerly there was an entrance to the Hospital, called the Grey Friars' gate ; but that gate has been closed for several years.

GEO. That is in the school in London : but you were in the school at Hertford for a little while. I should like to hear about that ; for I have never seen anything of it.

FATHER. Then will it not be better that I should begin from the time of my first entering the school ?

GEO. By all means. We will be all attention, and not interrupt you with questions.

FATHER. I shall have no objections to your asking any questions in the course of my narrative ; if there be anything which needs explanation.

ROB. Thank you, papa. Now when I have been reading a book I have sometimes met with a sentence that I could not tell the meaning of, and I have then wished that I could ask the author.

FATHER. Very soon after I was turned of seven years old, my father, who had received a presentation for me to Christ's Hos-

pital, took me to the counting-house, where I was examined by some medical gentlemen, to see that I was in good health. Then I went with a great many more boys to the Grammar-school, to be examined in reading and spelling. The practice then was, that those who could read and spell tolerably well were kept in London, and that the others who were not so forward were sent to Hertford.

GEO. Why I could read and spell almost anything before I was seven years old.

FATHER. Very likely, and so could I; but education was not quite so extensive, and did not begin quite so early then as in the present day. The practice now is, that those boys who are acquainted with the rudiments of the Latin language are kept in town, and those who know nothing but English are sent to Hertford. But though I could read I was sent to Hertford, because my friends thought that I should have my health better in the country than

in London. So the day after my examination I was dressed in my new clothes, and directed to be at the Bull Inn, Bishopgate-street, by two o'clock in the afternoon. There I met a great number of boys who were going to the same school, so the coach was quite occupied by us within and without. We had all of us of course just left our friends and companions, but I do not remember that any one of us was in low spirits. Every thing was new to us, and all the objects which we passed on the road served to amuse us. Though the distance between London and Hertford is only 21 miles, and we set off at half-past two o'clock, we were not at the end of our journey till nearly seven. Stage-coaches in those days were almost twice as long performing their journeys as they are now.

Though we were all very much amused with our journey, we were not sorry to arrive at the end of it; for we were anxious to have our curiosity gratified by a sight of

our new home. The building is situated just at the entrance of the town, and is enclosed by iron gates, and on either side of a large open space, which serves as a play-ground, there is a row of houses, which are called wards; the centre part of the open space is covered with fine gravel, and the sides next the houses are paved with small pebbles, and between the pavement and the gravel there is on either side a row of trees standing in front of the houses. At the upper end and facing the great iron gates is a large building, which looks like a chapel; that is the writing-school, and into that building we were introduced as soon as we dismounted from the coach. Then the writing-master, who had the general management and superintendence as steward, made his appearance; and I remember, as well as if it were yesterday, thinking him to be the greatest and most important personage that I had ever seen. He was a stout, well-made man, about 50 years of

age; he wore powder, and had a long pig-tail hanging more than half way down his back. But though I thought him a great man and a person of mighty consequence, I did not feel at all afraid of him; for though he spoke loud and had a very pompous manner, he looked at the same time very good-natured, and spoke very kindly to us.

GEO. What! did you go into school the very moment that you arrived?

FATHER. We were merely taken into the school-room, that we might be divided and sent into different wards. This arrangement was soon made, and I was consigned, with five of my little fellow-travellers, to a ward in which there were about 20 more boys under one nurse. The wards are now larger than they were at that time, and the houses have been joined two in one; so that the nurses have more boys under their care, and there are not so many nurses as formerly. For when I went into the school at Hertford, the boys were

boarded by the nurses, but since then a hall has been built, in which they all take their meals together.

ROB. How many boys are there in the establishment at Hertford?

FATHER. About 400; sometimes more and sometimes less.

ROB. And did you know all the boys while you were there?

FATHER. Not all perhaps, but I knew by name more than you may imagine I could. I soon became acquainted with all the boys that were in the same ward as myself. Then in school I became acquainted with those in the same class, and by degrees with some others.

GEO. How many masters were there at Hertford?

FATHER. There was one writing-master, under whom were two ushers; and there was only one grammar-master, who had no usher.

ROB. And could they manage to teach four hundred boys?

FATHER. Yes; for though there were many to be taught, they were in very few classes. The writing-school had the greatest number, and when I was in Christ's Hospital, those who were in the writing-school did not attend any other school, and those that were in the grammar-school went only occasionally to the writing-school just to learn enough of writing to be able to write their exercises. So that there was not at any time so many as four hundred boys at once under the immediate instruction of one master.

I was sent into the grammar-school, and as I had never heard or thought about the matter, it was strange enough to me when the Latin grammar was first put into my hands. But I was soon relieved from embarrassment by the readiness with which my school-fellows, who were in the class above me, assisted in explaining to me what I

could not understand. The master of the grammar-school at that time was a very kind and good-humoured man, and was always willing to answer any questions which the boys had occasion to ask him. But notwithstanding all the questions which I might have asked, it was a long while before I could understand the meaning and use of grammar.

ROB. How many classes were there in the grammar school? And what books did they learn?

FATHER. There were four classes; but we used to call them forms. They were only distinguished by the names of first, second, third, and fourth. The first was the highest; and as the boys at Hertford were mostly very young, the first form went no farther than to *Ovid's Metamorphoses* and *Selecta è Profanis*. The second form read the *Latin Testament* and *Phædrus's Fables*. The third learnt the *syntax* and *prosody*; and the fourth was only in the *accidence*.

Once in the year there was an examination, and then after that there was a removal into the upper form, according to the proficiency which we had made. The boys in the grammar-school at Hertford, you may very well suppose, had not much hard work. They said lessons three or four times a day; but those lessons were very short.

GEO. Well, but didn't you learn dancing, drawing, and French?

FATHER. Certainly not.

GEO. Then your school was not so good as the schools are now. Because at every little school now these things are taught, and a good many more.

FATHER. I am rather of opinion, my dear boy, that our school was all the better for not dividing the attention. These things, which you mention, may be learned at any time, after the labour and dullness of the rudiments of the dead languages are over. But the dead languages are not so

easily learned after the period of early youth.

ROB. Then that is the reason why you do not let us learn so many things as the other boys do at our school.

FATHER. It is so. But let us proceed with our history of the Blue-coat School at Hertford. The mode of teaching the rudiments is much the same in all public schools, and therefore I need not give you any particular account of that.

GEO. Oh no, certainly not; but I should like to hear about the manner in which you lived, and the amusements that you had; for it is so very different a system from a common boarding-school.

FATHER. Then I will give you an account of one day, which may serve as a specimen of all. We rose at six o'clock, and had prayers read by one of the elder boys, or monitors, and then we had our breakfast, which consisted of milk and

water, and bread and butter. At seven o'clock we went to school and came out for about half an hour at eight, and then went in again and staid till eleven. We then played till twelve, at which hour we dined ; in the afternoon we went into school at one and remained there till five ; we then played till six, then had supper, and when the days were long enough we played about after supper ; and at dusk we were called in to prayers and bed. In the winter we did not rise till seven, and came out of school at four instead of five.

GEO. What holidays had you ?

FATHER. We had half a holiday every Saturday : we also kept some of the Saints' days as holidays, and we had a week at Easter and another at Whitsuntide, and three weeks at August and a fortnight at Christmas.

GEO. But you did not go home to your friends at all these holidays ?

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FATHER. We did not; because when the school was first founded, it was designed for orphans of citizens of London, and it was therefore not considered probable that the children had friends sufficiently interested in them to be at the expense of conveying and entertaining them. So the holidays consisted merely of absence from school, and leave to play all day long, except on the Saints' days, and then we went to church in the morning, and had leave to play in the afternoon.

ROB. But your friends were allowed to come and see you in the holiday-times, I suppose?

FATHER. They were so; and they were also allowed to take us out to walk and to spend the day with them whenever they pleased, provided they brought us home at a certain hour in the evening. For this it was necessary to ask leave of the writing-master, who, as I told you before, was also the steward; and he gave us what we called

a ticket, that is, a piece of brass with the words 'Christ's Hospital' engraved upon it; and this piece of brass was tied by a piece of green string to the button-hole of the coat, and hung in front; so that if any body saw us in the town or neighbourhood with this ticket they knew that we were out upon leave.

GEO. Were there not some of the boys who had no friends to come and see them? it must have been very dull for them in the holiday-time.

FATHER. They were not quite so dull as you seem to imagine. Many of the boys who had parents living did not often see them; and when the friends of any boy came to see him, they generally took out with them one or two others. There were none totally neglected. Occasionally also during the summer or August holidays, one or other of the nurses would ask leave to take her whole ward out for a walk; and the usual place of resort upon these occa-

sions was a place called Port-Hill, which was a pleasant elevation at a small distance from the town of Hertford, and covered all down its sides with a thick plantation of fir trees; and it was abundant amusement to run about amongst the trees; and he was the happiest of the party who could carry home in his pocket the largest number of the cones, which at that time of the year fell from the trees.

ROB. And what were your amusements at home?

FATHER. In our play-ground we amused ourselves as all other boys do; but we had some peculiar pursuits, and one especially, which I believe is now quite extinct. You have seen little sheets of pictures, that are sold for a halfpenny? You would hardly suppose that any circumstance could so increase the value of these as to make one of the little pictures cut out of the sheet, and not more than an inch wide, nor more than two inches long, worth sixpence or a shil-

ling, and I believe in some cases even half-a-crown.

ROB. How could that be, papa?

FATHER. You may well express your astonishment at it. The passion for possessing these little pictures was as strong as that which collectors manifest for obtaining the beautiful paintings done by the most celebrated artists. I will endeavour to explain how it was that we had so great a desire after these particular pictures. The halfpenny sheets were composed of a great number of little prints of various objects, such as a horse, a plough, a harrow, a tent, a sword, a cannon, a ship, and so on. Hertfordshire, you know, is what is called an agricultural county; that is, though in every county the land is cultivated, yet in many counties there are various other employments for the people. Some counties are called manufacturing counties, such as Yorkshire, where woollen

cloth is made, and Wiltshire, where the finer broad cloth is manufactured. Lancashire also, where there are many cotton factories; but in Hertfordshire there are no manufactories and no mines, and therefore it is called an agricultural or farming county. Now that being the case, those pictures which related to farming were in most esteem; and when any boy had bought a sheet of pictures, his plan was always to cut each picture out and to place them in rows in some book: always placing first those which related to farming, and they went under the general name of *farm*. Next in importance to *farm*, were those pictures which had relation to military affairs, and these were called *Tower*: so called from the tower of London in which the armouries are kept. The other pictures were considered as of little or no value. Formerly these pictures were printed on paper that had some letter press on the other side; but at the time that I was at school they were

printed on a plain and very inferior kind of paper. Those pictures, therefore, which had printing on the back were considered much more valuable than the others, and none were of any great value till they were out of print. Another great point of excellence in these pictures was their brownness, as indicating their great antiquity. And as many tricks were played to give a colour to them, as are said to be used by picture dealers in the great world. They were frequently buried in little holes, which the boys dug in the gravel at the foot of one or other of the trees, and the consequence of that often was, that the poor pictures were totally destroyed. Though it is thirty-two years ago since I saw any of these pictures, I can remember the names of three which were very great favourites. One was of a man ploughing with three horses in length. The size of this was two inches long and about three quarters of an inch wide. From the shape it

was called '*Long-ploughing.*' Another of the same dimensions represented a man driving a waggon with six horses, and that was called '*Tom Long the Carrier.*' These two pictures were always placed first in every collection and none was thought complete without them. There was one however far more valuable, and so very scarce, that it was said to be absolutely worth half-a-crown. Once and only once I had the honour to see one, and I believe that was the only one remaining; for before I left Hertford, I have a notion that I heard the picture spoken of as a thing that had been and that was now no more. It was a picture of a man reaping. It was about an inch and a half square, and was called '*On redeeming time.*'

You smile at this, but I can assure you that we were perfectly serious, and more so in that pursuit than in any other which can be named. Half-a-crown may not now seem much to a school-boy,

but in those days and in that school it was very different. They were mostly very little boys, and scarcely any of them had a larger allowance than a penny a day, some had only a halfpenny a day and a penny on Sundays, and others as little as only twopence a week, that is a farthing a day and a halfpenny on Sundays. The name given to this allowance was very curious; we used to call it our '*outs*.' The reason of the name, I suppose, was, that we received every day so much *out* of the sum placed for us in the hands of the nurse.

GEO. Were you allowed to go into the town to spend your money?

FATHER. We were not. But there was a house within the bounds near to the gates, occupied by the beadle, who also acted as porter, and he kept a little shop, and sold gingerbread, and fruit, and such articles as the boys were allowed to purchase.

ROB. But had you not to pay more for

them than they would have cost you at any shop in the town?

FATHER. No, I think not. There was nothing in the establishment that at all savoured of meanness. It would not have been proper to suffer such little boys as we were to go out into the town whenever we had a penny to spend. But if at any time we wanted anything which we could not buy at the beadle's, we had frequent opportunities of sending into the town by means of the nurse's daughter or maid-servant; for the nurses are allowed a servant or assistant, and frequently the daughter acts in that capacity. There was also another way for us to get rid of our money; there was a fair two or three times in the course of the year, and upon that occasion there were several stalls placed against the great iron gates, and the boys were allowed to purchase what they pleased through the gates. And the poorest of all, those who had no regular allowance, or '*outs*,' ge-

nerally had a few pence to spend at the fair. He was considered very selfish who kept all he had to himself.

GEO. But were you not allowed to go out of the gates to see any of the shows?

FATHER. No; but I do not recollect that that gave us any uneasiness.

ROB. You just now mentioned the beadle. What was his employment?

FATHER. He used to walk about the playground to see that we did not behave improperly, that we did not use improper words, and that we did not quarrel and fight. We used to stand very much in awe of him; for he strutted about with a cane in his hand, which he used occasionally, but not with any great severity.

GEO. I always thought that the boys in the Blue-coat School were treated with great severity. Is it true that they are?

FATHER. They were never more severely treated than the boys of any other public school, and seldom I believe so

severely ; and at present, I understand, that corporeal punishment is almost discontinued.

ROB. You must then have been very happy at school if you were not severely treated, and if you had not long lessons to learn, and if you had a great many holidays.

FATHER. Yes, I must acknowledge that I spent my time very pleasantly ; but I was not without my troubles. At this moment I recollect one very great annoyance ; it may sound trifling, but I have a distinct recollection that it was no trifle to me and to many of my school-fellows. I have told you that there was a row of trees on either side of the play-ground. Now these trees, of course, shed their leaves in the autumn, and thereby a great litter was made. To get rid of this litter, every Saturday, and sometimes oftener, during the fall of the leaf, all the boys, without distinction, were pressed into the service, and were drawn up in double rows at either extremity of the

ground, and were set to gather up the fallen leaves into the skirts of their coats, which they held up as an apron, and the beadle superintended the process, carrying his cane in his hand, which perhaps was never more needed than on this occasion ; for the work was performed very reluctantly, and had the boys not been narrowly watched it would have been performed very imperfectly. By this arrangement, however, the ground was soon cleared, for the two divisions beginning at opposite extremities, met in the middle, where the gathered leaves were deposited in wheelbarrows.

GEO. Well, I do not think that was any great trouble, it was more like an amusement, especially on Saturday when you had been at play all the afternoon.

FATHER. Your remark is very good, but you may have observed that the longer young folks have been at play or merely idling about, the more reluctant are they

to go to work, or any thing that looks like work.

ROB. I should think that there could be hardly room enough for you all to play in one play-ground, unless it was very large indeed. For at our school there are only thirty or forty boys, and we have too little room; now your play-ground ought to have been ten times as large as ours.

FATHER. I can assure you we found the ground quite large enough. It very seldom suited the fancy of the whole 400 boys to be at once engaged in play. Many of them took up very little room with their quiet amusements. Some would be content to sit upon the steps of the door that opened into the ward, and amuse themselves with reading a little book. But there was not at that time any very great number of books for the use of children. We then read what we could procure, and were very much pleased with Jack the Giant-killer, Valentine and Orson, and many others of

the same kind. As we were all amused according to our own fancy, and as we only kept company with boys, and those very young, we of course had very strange and ridiculous notions; and the books with which we commonly amused ourselves were by no means calculated to give us more rational ideas. I can well remember that I was more delighted to walk about the play-ground with some companion or other, and to talk about all manner of nonsense, than to engage in any active sports. The boys now, I believe, have more frequent intercourse with their parents and friends, and as more interesting and useful little books are published for the use of young people, there may not be so many wild and romantic notions among the boys as there were in former days. I recollect we had strange ideas concerning the French. That was the time when the revolutionary war was raging, and there was a general horror of French principles and politics.

The boys used to divide themselves into parties, and play at French and English. It was a difficulty sometimes to make up the party for the French side, for they were all desirous of being on the English side, which was sure to be victorious.

ROB. But surely you did not fight?

FATHER. Oh no: we were only drawn up in two opposite ranks, and by means of a single ball thrown from one side to the other, the victory was decided; for when any one was struck by the ball, he was made prisoner, and won over to the other side, and then joined its ranks. But I was going to mention our childish notions concerning the French. It was our general opinion that if the French invaded England, we should be all compelled to turn papists, or be most cruelly put to death. It was curious enough to hear how largely some of the little boys would talk about their firmness and readiness to submit to anything, rather than to avow themselves papists.

Of course you may suppose that we did not know anything about the meaning of popery or no popery. There was also another strange notion which some of the younger boys had in their heads, and that was concerning the Swedes. I remember that we used to talk of them as a species of giants, or rather monsters, and as possessing such enormous strength that one individual of them was almost equal to a whole army of common men, and we used to say that while the Swedes were on the side of the English, it was impossible for the French to conquer us.

GEO. But did you not sometimes meet with those who would inform you better on these matters?

FATHER. We had no social intercourse with any but ourselves. In small schools the boys have opportunities of talking with their masters or ushers, but we were too numerous for that, we regarded our masters with a more distant kind of reverence. Nor

did we ever associate with any other children. We used rather to regard them with a degree of disdain, calling them town boys. Indeed to every thing not belonging to the establishment we gave the epithet '*town*.' There was one of the boys, whose friends, not liking the plain leather girdle which was generally worn, gave him one of red morocco, and he was mentioned as the only one who ever wore a *town* girdle; but there were many who wore town buckles, cutting off the original buckle of their girdles, and supplying its place with one of steel, or silver, or paste. The upper boys indeed invariably wore town buckles, for they had stamped girdles, as they are called. These stamped girdles are marked with little stars, a head of Edward the sixth, and with a Blue-coat boy: and no buckles are provided for the girdles of this description. In opposition to the word *town* we used the word *house*. The common buckles were called *house-buckles*, and so of every thing else

for which we were in the habit of using any substitute. The bread which was made for our use we called *house-bread*, and that which was made by bakers we called *town-bread*.

ROB. I suppose that you had not very white bread at your school.

FATHER. As far as I can recollect, we had bread of a very excellent quality, such as that we call home-made bread. Our living was plain, but it was good and sufficient. Since the building of the hall it is regularly and uniformly the same for all the boys; but when I was at school each nurse provided for the boys of her own ward. When I come to that part of my history which relates to the school in London, I will tell you more particularly the nature and arrangement of our diet.

GEO. But you have hitherto told us none of your own personal history, or any adventures which you were engaged in.

FATHER. I have not: and indeed I do

not well see how I could; for there was but little opportunity for adventures; and the minuter particulars of my history I may very well forget, for I was at Hertford only two years, and was only seven years old when I went there, and of course only nine when I left. I think now it is time to make a little pause in my narrative, and when you are next at liberty to hear any more, I will pursue the story as to what I experienced and can recollect of my history when I was removed to London.

CHAP. II.

GEORGE. Now we are quite ready to hear what you have to tell us about the Blue-Coat School in London.

FATHER. After I had been at Hertford two years, as I had made a tolerably quick progress in the grammar-school, I was sent to the school in London. There were about as many of us in the stage-coach which took us to London, as there were when I first went down to Hertford, and we enjoyed the journey very much; we were in high spirits, and very much pleased at going to a new scene. Those of our school-fellows who remained at Hertford pretended to laugh at us, and said that we should be glad to come back again for a

piece of pudding. For at the school at Hertford, when the nurses boarded the boys, they had puddings occasionally, but these were no part of the diet in London. The Hertford boys called the London boys "*Jackdaws*," and those in London called them that were at Hertford "*Hedge-hogs*."

ROB. You were not very polite to each other; but I dare say you were rather envied when you were removed to London, because the boys in London have leave so very often to go out and see their friends. And I think that I should like much better to go out to see my friends than to have my friends come to school to see me.

FATHER. That was certainly one reason why we were glad to be removed to London, but another was, that at Hertford we were regarded as children and little boys, whereas a removal to London gave us the idea that we were growing up to be something more than mere children. The coach in which we travelled, instead of going to

the inn where it usually stops, carried us directly to the school and took us to the steward's office. At the school in London, where there are upwards of six hundred boys, there is a steward, who attends only to the duties of steward, and is not also one of the masters, as at Hertford. The gentleman who held the office when I was in the school, was not quite so portly a looking personage as the writing-master and steward at Hertford; but he was one who seemed to be of much greater importance, and had a much more solemn look. He was tall and thin, and carried himself very erect, and spoke with great precision and solemnity. He appeared to me as a man that never laughed, and that seldom smiled. He was remarkably neat in his dress, and he also wore a pigtail, which was not so uncommon an ornament in those days as it is now. I must acknowledge that I was not at all prepossessed in his favour by his first appearance, but I must also say that no man

could more conscientiously discharge his duty than he did. He was the most vigilant and observing person that I have ever known, and he had such an exact and ready memory, that he seemed to us boys to be able to see every thing, and capable of remembering every thing that had happened.

By the orders of the steward, we were divided into our several wards according as there were vacancies. It was my good fortune to be placed under a nurse, who was one of the neatest, most kind hearted, and attentive nurses that ever lived. If the stately formality of the steward made an unfavourable impression upon my mind, the looks of the nurse, who was all kindness and good-humour, produced quite a contrary effect, and placed me quite at my ease again.

GEO. That must have been very pleasant, for I should think that much of your comfort must have depended upon the kindness of the nurse.

FATHER. Very much indeed; for a nurse is to the boys in that school in the place of a mother. But, to go on with my history, the day after I arrived in London I had a holiday to go and visit my friends; and a most delightful holiday it was. I had been two years absent from London, and away from my home; and at that time of life two years appeared a very long while. I fancied myself so much grown, and of so much greater importance, that I was as conceited as a young gentleman just returned from the continent. After two years' absence, London appeared as a strange place; but I was quite delighted with the bustle, and noise, and confusion.

ROB. I should think that you must have felt rather awkward at leaving all your old school-fellows, and being placed altogether among strangers.

FATHER. I did not leave all my school-fellows. Many of them came with me; and I also found in London some that I

had known at Hertford, and that had come to town before me. And being near my friends and relations was another consideration, which rendered the change delightful.

GEO. What sort of buildings are the wards in London? for though I have often seen the Blue-coat School in passing through, I have no recollection of seeing the wards, so as to know them.

FATHER. The wards in London differ very much from those at Hertford. Those at Hertford consist, as I told you, of two rows of houses opposite each other. But those in London are merely large, long rooms, with beds ranged on both sides, and at either end, and having a small apartment for the nurse's parlour, and another for her bed-room. They are not regularly built, but they vary in shape and size. Some of the wards will accommodate as many as seventy-two boys, and others only forty or fifty. You remember of course the cloisters. Now the wards are mostly

surrounding that open space, which you see from the cloisters, and which is called the garden. There is no appearance of a garden now, there is only a square, paved with small stones, and used as a playground. Three of the cloisters are immediately underneath the wards. One of the wards is on the ground floor, and the entrance to it is in the north-east corner of the cloisters. There is another over it, and one more that is over another part of the same cloister. In all, there are twelve wards. But since the preparations were commenced for the building of a new hall, which is now just finished, one or two of the wards have been taken down.

GEO. Did not a part of the old building fall down a few years ago?

FATHER. Yes. That was the kitchen, a very old and lofty building. It had been part of the monastery of the Grey-Friars, and was several hundred years old. You may remember that when I took you to see

the boys at dinner, you saw the kitchen at the right hand of the landing-place, leading to the hall. And do you not remember, though you were a very little boy then, that I shewed you another flight of stairs, that led up to two of the wards?

GEO. I think I can remember it.

FATHER. All those old buildings are now taken down, the old hall, the kitchen, and those two wards. But I need not describe to you the buildings because you have seen them, and if you had not, it would be almost impossible to give you an idea of them merely by description: for they have been constructed at different times, and planned without much regard to anything else than internal accommodation.

ROB. Oh, never mind those matters; only just tell us what you recollect concerning yourself, and your master, and your school-fellows.

FATHER. As far as I can recollect it I

will, and I dare say that it will be more entertaining to you. Indeed, if you wish to know various particulars concerning the buildings, and the general history of the establishment, you may find that in a book published by a person who was brought up in the school. The book is called a '*Brief History of Christ's Hospital from its foundation by Edward the Sixth, till the present time.*' I will then proceed with my narrative.

As soon as I arrived in London, I had, as I said before, a holiday to go and see my friends. I was of course very much pleased with my holiday. But I was not altogether sorry when it was over: for I was quite curious to see my new abode, and my new school. Early on the following morning I was told that I was to go into the upper grammar-school. I was proud enough of that honour. I don't know that I can ever be so proud of anything, as I was of that. I had received a very good character from

the grammar-master at Hertford, and had been sent up to London at nine years old, instead of being kept there, as was generally the case, till eleven. The upper grammar-school was, comparatively, a small school, containing about fifty or sixty boys. It was at that time divided into five forms. The first was called the Grecians' form, or more frequently only the Grecians. There were only three of them when I went into the grammar-school. They were from sixteen to nineteen years of age, and they kept themselves very much aloof from the rest of the boys. I think that I may venture to say that there are no human beings on the face of the earth, who think more highly of themselves than the Grecians at Christ's Hospital. But it must also be said in excuse for them, that the rest of the boys think as highly of them, as they do of themselves. In other schools, boys of sixteen and seventeen will run about and play with those of fourteen or fifteen; but a

Grecian only walks with his fellow-Grecian round and round the cloisters, apparently insensible to all the noise and play that is passing about them.

These Grecians are preparing for the University, and as they are older than the rest of the boys, they are thus kept at a distance from them. They would not be quite so proud and consequential if there were more of their own age, and of the same acquirements. For when they go from school to the University, where they meet with their equals and superiors in age and attainments, they lose a great deal of their self-conceit, and when after that they enter the world and mix with society, they lose it altogether, if they have any tolerable degree of understanding.

The next class in the upper grammar-school is called the deputy-Grecians, and as some of these are designed to be Grecians, they have their share of a feeling of self-importance. They are not quite

so much apart from the other boys as the Grecians are, nor do they frequently mingle in the noisy sports of the rest of the boys. I never remember to have seen a deputy-Grecian play at marbles. The number of this class varies from three to nine or ten.

ROB. I suppose they learn Greek.

FATHER. Yes they do, and so does the next form called '*Great Erasmus*,' which had its name from the celebrated scholar Erasmus. But the next form called the *Little Erasmus*, only learns Latin and the rudiments of Greek Grammar. And when I went into the upper grammar-school there was a fifth form, called the *Selecta form*, which learned only the *Selecta è profanis*. This form was soon afterwards incorporated with the *Little Erasmus*.

GEO. But if there were only fifty or sixty boys in the upper grammar-school, how were all the rest of the six hundred educated?

FATHER. A very great number was in

the writing-school. Some few in the mathematical-school, and some in the reading-school, which is now abolished, and about a hundred and thirty or forty in the under grammar-school. But according to an alteration, which has taken place since I left the school, all the boys are instructed in the classics to a certain extent, and all are instructed in writing and arithmetic. When I was in Christ's Hospital the schools were quite distinct, and those who were learning the classics had no instruction in arithmetic, and those in the writing-school had no instruction in classical literature.

ROB. Was not that an unfair arrangement?

FATHER. Not quite so unfair as you may imagine. I told you there was a reading-school: now if a boy was sent into the reading-school, as not being quite competent to begin Latin, and if he remained in the reading-school, not making much progress, he was removed after a time to

the writing-school, where he received what used to be called a plain English education, fitting him for a place in a merchant's counting-house, or giving him abundant information to make him competent to learn any business as an apprentice. So again, if a boy at his first admission into the school, or at being removed from the reading-school, was put into the under grammar-school, and made but little progress in his studies there, he was removed into the writing-school, where he was qualified for commercial pursuits. And if those who were removed from the under to the upper grammar-school did not make sufficient progress to render it desirable for them to obtain a complete classical education, they were sent into the writing-school and prepared for business. But as education has of late years become more diffused and general, the governors of Christ's Hospital have adapted the system to the present state of society. For this

is one of the few public schools which is not opposed to any improvement or alteration.

GEO. Then, I suppose, that the boys of the upper grammar-school, in general, were rather proud of their distinction.

FATHER. They were so. And they endeavoured to look down upon the boys of the writing-school, as professional persons, or as men of independent fortune look down upon shopkeepers and mechanics.

ROB. What kind of a master had you in the upper grammar-school?

FATHER. A very disagreeable one indeed. To me indeed he was absolutely terrible. I was but nine years old when I was placed under his care. I was an unusually timid and nervous child. To the upper boys I looked with great respect and awe; but as for the master himself I quite dreaded him.

GEO. Was he a very pompous and stately man?

FATHER. By no means. He was a short, stout, round little man, wearing a large white wig, a cocked or three-cornered hat, and having his short thick legs covered with worsted stockings, and his shoes adorned with great broad silver buckles. He was quite an old-fashioned man thirty years ago, and you may suppose that he appears to my recollection now as a very singular man indeed.

ROB. But if he was so very little a man, I wonder that the boys should have stood in awe of him; for I have seen some of the head boys in Christ's Hospital, who must have been taller than the master.

FATHER. That is very likely; and this terrible little man has been known to punish, very severely, boys, or rather young men, who were half a head taller than himself. And the reason why these young men submitted was, not that they had not strength to resist, but because if they had resisted or opposed him, they

would have been expelled from the school, and thereby all their prospects for future life would have been ruined. As for the younger boys they were really afraid of him. You may easily imagine what an impression it produced on me, when within a day or two of my first taking my seat in his school, I saw him take a little boy by the ears, and pinch him till the poor fellow roared and shrieked with the agony. There were many who could show on their ears the marks of this tyrant's thumb nails.

GEO. What a brute he must have been. I wonder that the governors of the school did not remove him from his situation.

FATHER. The governors were not aware, perhaps, of the extent of his roughness; and it would have appeared very ridiculous to make a formal complaint against a master for lugging a boy's ears. You must also consider, that in former times the severity of school discipline was much greater

than it is now. If I were to relate to you the cruelties that have been inflicted upon children in public schools many years ago, you would shudder to hear them. The fact is, that in those times it was generally considered next to impossible to teach the learned languages without frequent use of severe punishment. And perhaps there was some ground for that opinion : for the grammars and elementary books were then so very dull and difficult, and required so much labour in learning, that very few boys, especially when very young, could be induced to give attention to such books without the use of great severity. Children, you know, are seldom, perhaps never aware of the value which learning will be of to them in after life, and therefore when they find application painful, they will not give it without some very powerful motive. And in former days the teachers, to save themselves the trouble of making the rudiments of learning more easy and agreeable,

treated their pupils with great severity and cruelty to compel their attention. So that, though this disagreeable little grammar-master of ours appeared to us very barbarous and tyrannical, he may not have been more so than most of the masters in his younger days. He also seemed to think, that nothing was or could be so important as classical literature, and therefore he thought that every thing should be done or suffered to attain it. With all his severity, however, he certainly did manage to send to the Universities some very good scholars.

ROB. But how could you manage to learn your lessons at all, or to bear your life, if you were in such constant terror? I think I could have done nothing if I had been so terrified.

FATHER. The terror was not quite so constant and oppressive as that, for sometimes the old gentleman would be in a good humour, and even be merry, and

say what he thought to be witty in order to make us laugh; and you may readily believe that we were not backward in laughing at what he said, if we saw that he wished us to laugh. And sometimes he would endeavour to make us understand and believe that he had our interest really at heart, and for the time we believed him, and were very ready to forgive him.

GEO. And was there never anything of a rebellion against him?

FATHER. Never, so far as my knowledge reaches. For you must remember that his was not the only authority to which we were subject. He was not like the master of a private boarding or day-school, but there were other officers in the establishment, to whom we were under subjection. There was the steward, who had the general superintendence and care of us all; to see that we behaved orderly and quietly. And there were several beadles who were continually walking about in the

several play-grounds, and there were our nurses and monitors who had authority in the wards; and, therefore, we felt ourselves to be under constant superintendence, and in most inevitable subjection.

ROB. I don't think I should have liked that.

FATHER. I have no recollection that I particularly disliked it, or felt any thing very unpleasant in the restraint. Indeed I think it was all the better for us that we were so.

GEO. But, father, was there not a gentleman here the other day, who said that the boys of Christ's Hospital were suffered to run about the streets and to go where they liked, and to do what they pleased? And I myself have often met many of them in the city and in the neighbourhood of town, and they have seemed to be quite their own masters for the time.

FATHER. Yes; and have you ever seen

any one of these boys behaving improperly in any respect in consequence of this liberty?

GEO. I cannot say that I have. Perhaps they know that they are so distinguished by their dress, that they would be sure to be known.

FATHER. You are right ; and therefore the boys of Christ's hospital are not in so much danger of doing wrong, or of coming to any mischief, by being suffered to walk at large in the streets, as other boys who live with their parents, and have to find their own way backwards and forwards to and from a day-school ; besides, there are in London some officers of the city called Street-keepers, and these persons generally have an eye on the boys of the school. So that, in fact, though they seem to have so much liberty, yet they are never out of observation.

ROB. When you first came to the school

in London, did you not find a very great difference between that and the school at Hertford?

FATHER. I did so. I found a difference in the masters, a difference in the boys, and a difference in the diet. The grammar-master, under whose care I was placed at Hertford, was one of the most kind and gentle beings that ever lived; and I fear that he rather spoiled us by his too great leniency and neglect. The grammar-master in London, that is, the upper grammar-master, I have already described to you; and that was a change by no means agreeable to me. But the lessons which I had at first to learn being very nearly the same as those which I had previously learned at Hertford, I did not suffer any such very great inconvenience at first, as might have been apprehended. As for the boys in the school, the change there was the greatest of all. The Grecians, who were older by a year or two than the rest

of the boys, and who had peculiar privileges, I looked up to with more awe than I ever before or since have felt for any human being.

GEO. What peculiar privileges had these Grecians?

FATHER. They had in their respective wards, little apartments called studies, which were fitted up with a table and chair or two, and shelves for books. None of them I believe had fire-places, but they partook only of the general warmth of the ward, which was not very great; for to a ward of fifty or sixty feet in length, and of proportionate width and height, there were only two fire places. In these studies the Grecians always took their meals, which they had not at the time the other boys had theirs, but they were allowed about an hour or less during school time, in the morning for their breakfast at nine, and in the afternoon for their dinner at two. Their dress also differed from that

of the other boys, for their coats were made to measure and fitted them well, while the coats of the other boys, as you may have observed, are wide and straight, and hang loosely about them; and instead of having the hair cut round and lying flat on, the Grecians took the liberty of dressing their heads according to what might happen to be the fashion of the day. They were also indulged with the privilege of walking out, whenever they pleased, out of school hours, and they were not under the necessity of returning home in the evening so soon as the other boys. Such privileges as these made them think very highly of themselves, and led their schoolfellows also to regard them with an especial reverence.

ROB. I recollect very well then, having seen these Grecians walking in the streets in the city, for I noticed how tall they were, and I remember observing a great difference in the shape of their dress, I

thought they looked so much better than the boys in general. But are they not very proud?

FATHER. Most great boys who are surrounded by little boys are so. And the Grecians in Christ's Hospital may appear peculiarly so, because their number is very small. There are seldom above three or four at the utmost; for there is only one every year sent to Cambridge, and one every seven years sent to Oxford; and they seldom reached the rank of Grecian till they were fifteen years old. They are, of course, conceited enough while they are thus distinguished; but their conceit abates when they go to the University and meet their equals and superiors; and whatever vanity may not be quite extinguished at the University, generally leaves them when they enter the world.

But besides the Grecians there was another set of boys to whom the rest of the school looked up with peculiar reverence.

These were the upper boys in the mathematical school. They were called the first order, and were for the most part beyond fifteen years of age. There was, however, when I was in the school, a great difference between the Grecians and the first order. The Grecians, as preparing for holy orders, were more staid and grave in their deportment; they had sufficient dignity, but they had also much gravity, they would quietly and gently put aside a younger boy standing in their way; but one of the first order would drive rudely against any one who might obstruct his path.

GEO. What profession were the boys in the mathematical school intended for?

FATHER. They were brought up for the sea-service, and were bound apprentices to Captains in the East India Company's service, or went as midshipmen on board ships of war; and as the service for which they were destined was one which required hardihood and boldness, they seemed for the

most part pretty well prepared for it. The Grecians were sometimes liked by the younger boys, but the first order were always feared. I remember hearing many terrible and some not very probable stories, concerning the roughness and violence of these lads. I have been told that they were quite a terror to the poulterers and other tradesmen in Newgate-market, and that they would sometimes help themselves to a pigeon or a chicken, and throw down a penny in payment for it, and that the people in the market were afraid to resist them. How far such stories may be true I cannot say, but it may serve to give you some idea of the feeling of the rest of the boys towards them. It is indeed a fact that there was, some few years before I entered the school, a steward, who had little or no authority over the elder boys, and in his time no doubt many mischievous pranks were played by them. There was of course a great difference to my view

between the boys of the Hertford and those of the London establishment. There was also a difference in the diet and manner of living.

ROB. Yes, I have been told that the boys in the school in London are very poorly fed.

FATHER. You have been told so by those who have known nothing at all about the establishment. It is too much the fashion to find fault with the administration and management of all public institutions. That the boys in that school are well and abundantly fed is very manifest from their cheerful and healthy looks. In former times school-boys, whether in private or in public schools, had much coarser and scantier fare than they have now. But I will tell you what was our mode of living thirty years ago. For breakfast, which we took at half-past six in summer, and at half-past seven in winter, we had bread and beer only. The bread was very good, and the

beer was as bad as beer can possibly be ; it was not much drunk, for there was an excellent pump of fine, pure water, which for the most part supplied the drink of the boys. Our dinner hour used to be twelve, and every day had its appointed and regular diet. On Sunday we had boiled beef, on Monday milk porridge and bread and butter, on Tuesday roast mutton, on Wednesday rice milk and bread and butter, on Thursday boiled beef, on Friday boiled mutton, and on Saturday pease soup and bread and butter. For supper, which we took at six in summer and at five in winter, we had bread and cheese, and the allowance of cheese was so liberal, that some who were careful and provident would save half their allowance till next morning, so that they might not be under the necessity of eating dry bread alone. On Sunday and Wednesday we had bread and butter for supper, and every night there was to each ward a certain allowance of butter for

the accommodation of those boys who did not like, or who could not eat cheese.

GEO. Then you were not compelled to eat what you did not like?

FATHER. We were not. A certain allowance was given to us, and we might eat it or leave it as we thought proper. We all had the same quantity, but we had not all the same appetite, and if there was any part of our food which we did not care to eat, we put it out on the middle of the table, and any one else was at liberty to take it.

GEO. But you could not put meat on the middle of the table unless you had dishes for the purpose.

FATHER. We could and we did. We knew nothing of dishes; the meat was brought into the hall on large wooden platters, and served to us on square flat trenchers.

ROB. Then you could have no gravy with your meat.

FATHER. That was so much the better for us. But our boiled meat was not dry, for the broth in which it was boiled was served out in wooden bowls to such as chose to take it. After we had dined all the bread and meat which remained on the table was collected in the table-cloth, shook out into the large bread baskets belonging to each ward, and then taken into the kitchen, where they were divided into portions, and distributed to some poor people who came daily for that purpose. I should also have added that on one Sunday in every month we had roast beef, once in a year boiled pork, once a year roast pork, and once a year roast veal.

ROB. But I have heard that you never had any vegetables.

FATHER. When I was in the school we had not regularly, but I recollect that during the time that bread was very dear we had substitutes for it in part. With our meat-dinners we had potatoes, and

then we had only half our usual allowance of bread. For our breakfast too, as another mode of sparing bread, we had for some time a kind of thick porridge made with barley, and sweetened with sugar, I forget the name of it, and I do not know whether it ever had a name. There is now an alteration, I understand, in their provision; they have vegetables regularly, and they have milk at breakfast instead of beer, they have also plum-puddings occasionally. Indeed the governors are very attentive to the comforts of the boys, and one very pleasant reason of this increased attention is, that of late years many persons have become governors, who have themselves been educated in the school, and they are of course better acquainted with the feelings of the boys, and they are naturally desirous of doing all they can for the prosperity of the establishment.

GEO. From the account you give us of

your table, it does not seem that you were remarkable for neatness.

FATHER. You are right, and in addition to other negligences, I have to tell you that when I first went into the school in London, the boys had no knives and forks allowed them ; and they used to cut their meat upon their wooden trenchers as well as they could, with their clasp knives which they had in their pockets, and as it was not the good fortune of every boy to have one of these, they were borrowed and handed about from one to another. But very soon after I came from Hertford we had knives and forks provided for us. I remember the first winter that I was in the school, when we supped in public, that several of the visitors in the hall took notice of the clumsy attempts made, by those that had no knives, to spread their butter upon the bread.

GEO. Was not your bread and butter spread for you ?

FATHER. It was not. Our bread was half a small loaf, and on that was laid a lump of butter, which we might spread as well as we could. On the evenings when we supped in public the butter was previously made up into little pats, and stamped with some impression, and these being for each ward laid regularly and neatly out on a clean white wooden platter, had a remarkably neat appearance.

ROB. What do you mean by supping in public.

FATHER. From the Sunday after Christmas till Easter Sunday inclusive, we used to sup in public; on which occasion the hall was lighted up with chandeliers and patent lamps; the floor was spread with saw-dust, and the organ, which was in a gallery over the great iron gates, which formed the principal entrance to the hall, was opened, and those boys who were best able to sing were placed in this gallery to conduct the singing of the psalm,

which always formed part of the worship before supper, but which on these occasions was longer than usual, and accompanied by the organ. Visitors were admitted into the hall, formerly by tickets, but of late years by personal introduction of a governor, or some officer or master in the establishment.

There were seats at the upper end of the hall, raised one above another, and covered with green baize, for the accommodation of the visitors. And in the centre of the lowest range of seats was placed an arm-chair, in which sat the President, or treasurer, or some senior governor; the rest of the governors who were present sitting on either side of the chair. The governors on this, as on most public occasions, were distinguished by slender painted wands. Before supper one of the Grecians mounted a pulpit on one side of the hall and read out of the New Testament the lesson appointed for the evening ser-

vice, then a prayer composed for the use of Christ's Hospital by Dr. Gibson, formerly Bishop of London; after this a psalm was sung by all the boys, accompanied by the organ; then followed grace before supper. The boys then took their seats at table, their bread and butter and beer served out to them, and the visitors walked about the hall and amused themselves with observing the boys. Many of the persons present as visitors were the friends or relations of the boys, and it was to the boys themselves a kind of holiday, especially to the younger ones; but I recollect that some of the elder ones, more out of affectation than from real feeling, used to express themselves as if weary of the exhibition.

The supper consisting only of bread and butter was soon finished. The steward then gave a signal and the boys left their seats and arranged themselves in order on either side of the hall; grace was then said by the Grecian as before, and an anthem

was sung by some of the best singers among the boys, who were placed in the organ-loft; the chorus was performed by the whole number. After this came the ceremony of bowing round before the governors.

GEO. What, did all the whole six hundred boys bow before the governors.

FATHER. Yes, and the ceremony was not so tedious as you may imagine. The Grecians came first, and having made their obeisance, they severally took their stations at different parts of the hall, that they might have an eye upon the boys to see that they behaved properly. Each ward came in order, with the nurse at the head; and as every table had four candles, these candles were carried by two of the least of the boys in the ward, one went at the head and the other at the middle of the procession. The boys also who had offices in the ward carried with them the respective articles which belonged to his office. One

carried upon his shoulder the empty bread basket, another had upon his arm the platter on which the butter had been brought in, another the knife basket, another the table cloth, another the wooden piggins which were used for drinking the beer, and another the two black leatherjacks, in which the beer was brought up to the hall. During the procession the organ was continually playing some voluntary, so that it was altogether a cheerful scene.

ROB. What was the anthem which was sung after supper?

FATHER. There were many anthems composed at different times and by different persons, and these anthems were for every Sunday written out by the best writers on a half sheet of paper, and they were handed about to the governors and some of the visitors by two of the upper boys of the writing-school.

From the hall we immediately went to our wards, and one of the upper boys

read prayers, and then we retired to bed.

GEO. Had you single beds?

FATHER. When I was in the school we slept two in a bed ; but of late years an alteration has been made, and each boy has a bed to himself on an iron bedstead. The beds now stand with their heads to the wall, and there is a space between each. But when I was there the beds were ranged on the sides of the ward, head to foot, and separated from each other by a wooden partition, which in some wards was covered over at the top, so that each bed was a little apartment by itself. And all along by the side of the beds were placed what we called settles, that is, boxes in which we used at night to put our shoes, and where we also kept such toys or play-things as we might possess, but they were not very numerous.

GEO. I think I should have preferred those snug beds to the single beds.

FATHER. I dare say that you think that we were less observed, and could have more amusement in these confined apartments; and that is one reason why the alteration was made.

GEO. And did you play many tricks, or have much fun in consequence of this arrangement?

FATHER. That we certainly did; and especially in the long winter nights; for as we were sent to bed about six or a little after, and did not get up till seven, we had more time in bed than we could possibly consume in sleep. I have told you that in each ward there were two fire-places; one of these was called the nurse's fire-place, and the other the monitors' fire-place. But the nurse had also a little parlour of her own, in which she most usually sat. That fire-place called the nurse's, was in the evening mostly occupied by the nurse's maid; and the monitors, with their table and candle, together

with one or two other boys who were occasionally indulged with the privilege of sitting up, occupied the other fire-place. While any one was thus sitting up and watching us, we were tolerably orderly; but when the nurse and the monitors had retired to bed, then our irregularities began. A party of four or five, and sometimes even more, would meet together by previous appointment in one bed, where they would sit together for two or three hours telling wonderful stories, which some of them had read in the romances of the day.

ROB. Were you allowed to read romances?

FATHER. We were not allowed, nor were we prohibited from it. In those days very little attention was paid to the reading of boys, and there were comparatively few rational books for the use of young people. Children's books were, for the most part, of a very extravagant and romantic cast.

ROB. But how did you get romances? You did not subscribe to circulating libraries, I suppose?

FATHER. I did not; and I am not aware that any of the boys did; but the daughter of the nurse under whose care I was placed, subscribed to a library in Woodstreet, Cheapside, which was not far from the school, and I was frequently employed to go there to change the books. The nurses were allowed each one ticket, by which they could send any boy on an errand. This ticket the nurse's daughter would give to one of the boys, sending him to the circulating library; and as the boys came out of school at eleven o'clock, and did not dine till twelve, there was time in that interval to run to Woodstreet and back, and to read a considerable portion of one of those small volumes. Sometimes three or four of us would sit together on the steps of the grammar-school, poring over the same book, and

reading with most astonishing rapidity page after page. And sometimes the nurse's daughter would indulge us so far, as to let us have it in the hall at dinner time; so by some means or other we contrived to obtain possession of the whole story. The stories of these romances thus imperfectly picked up, would serve to amuse us at night at our illegal meetings. I can hardly imagine now what pleasure there could have been in these meetings, except that they were forbidden under very severe penalties; for we had plenty of time in the course of the day to meet and talk together.

GEO. But there was not much mischief done by such meetings?

FATHER. There were some meetings, however, in which most serious mischief might have been done. One of these took place very soon after I was removed from Hertford to London; and, if I recollect rightly, one of the monitors was con-

cerned in it. I will endeavour to explain it to you. You remember that I have described to you the situation and arrangement of our beds, and I have also told you that at the lower part, or towards the lower part of the ward, the monitors' fire-place was situated. Now this fire-place stood in a recess formed by the divisions of the beds, and was open at the top and in the front. One night, instead of putting the fire quite out, this monitor, and the party concerned with him, merely covered the fire with ashes so as to hide it; and when the nurse was gone to bed, he and his companions got up, and having covered in the top and front of the recess with the blankets and rugs belonging to their beds, so as to conceal the appearance of light, they rekindled the fire and cooked for themselves a supper of beef steaks; and as they could not get access to more coals without making such a noise as might expose them to detection, they were com-

pelled when the fire was out to betake themselves to bed. But as they were not even then disposed to go to sleep, they came to the bed in which I was sleeping with a bedfellow as young as myself, and they took away the clothes of our bed to form a thick covering to conceal the light, which they carried with them into bed, and to make us amends for the robbery, they invited us to be of the party, and there we sat like so many Indians in a hut, wrapped up in sheets or blankets, and alternately telling stories till almost day-break.

ROB. And were you not found out?

FATHER. No, nor even suspected. And I believe that scarcely a night passed without some such meetings. But at length they were discovered and a stop was put to them. One of the parties concerned in the meeting which I have mentioned, was reported to have held a lighted taper under his coat while the steward was lecturing

him on the impropriety of such conduct ; but how far the story was true I cannot say ; boys are always fond of narrating marvellous tales. Now from what I have already told you, you may see how important it is that the masters and officers should be chosen, as far as possible, from among those who have been brought up in the school ; and when some also who have been in the school become governors, and take an active part in the management of the establishment, it is very natural that many improvements should take place.

GEO. It seems then, notwithstanding the dignity of the steward, and the severity of the masters, that the boys in London were not quite so orderly as the boys at Hertford.

FATHER. They certainly were not ; and that was owing to several causes. You will remember that the boys at Hertford were very young, they were comparatively children. Whereas in London there were

many of them great boys. In London also you may suppose that the boys saw and heard more than they did at Hertford, and they did not feel themselves quite so dependent. But the principal cause of all, perhaps, was, as I have before mentioned or alluded to, that just before I went into the school there had been a steward who was very negligent and inattentive, and who suffered the boys to do almost just as they pleased. The irregularities of which I am speaking took place at the beginning of my time; they were pretty well, if not entirely, done away with before I left the school. So great was the disorder of the wards at night, that I very distinctly remember, when I was a very little boy, not perhaps more than ten years old, seeing ten or a dozen of the bigger boys getting out of their beds at midnight, and having partly dressed themselves, amuse themselves for an hour or more by playing at leap-frog.

ROB. It appears indeed from what you say, that you must have found a very great difference between the Hertford and the London schools. But I suppose that in London you must have had more enjoyment and liberty than at Hertford; for in the country you could only see your friends when they came to you; but in town you had an opportunity of going out very often to see your friends.

FATHER. We had so indeed. Some persons have imagined that we enjoyed too much liberty of this kind; but we never thought so, and we were not satisfied with the half days of leave to go out, on the various Saints' days, and with the holidays at Easter, Whitsuntide, August, and Christmas; but we took every opportunity that we could to obtain tickets from the nurse, the matron, the master, or the steward. From the two last, indeed, we could not obtain tickets without having done something to deserve them; but those of us

whose friends had acquaintance with the nurse or matron, could occasionally obtain a ticket by mere solicitation. And it is very likely that owing to these tickets, by which some boys are out every day in the week, it is supposed that the boys have so many holidays, and that they are suffered to be so much in the streets. But it is now time to make a little pause in our history, and to-morrow, if you please, we will proceed.

CHAP. III.



ROB. I have been thinking a great deal of what you told us yesterday about Christ's Hospital; and I have a great many more questions to ask you; and I scarcely know where to begin. Pray are those boys, who wear silver badges on their shoulders, monitors?

FATHER. No, they belong to the mathematical school. I do not know whether you may have observed it, but there are two sorts of badges, one of which is perfectly round and worn on the left shoulder, and the other is almost an oval and worn on the right shoulder. Those boys who wear round badges on the left shoulder are called king's boys, and belong to the mathemati-

cal school, which was founded by Charles the Second. Formerly these boys were in a ward of their own, called the king's ward; but, in consequence of some irregularities, such as I alluded to yesterday, when I spoke of the first order, they have been of late years dispersed into the other wards. So that if a boy now goes into the mathematical school, he does not, as formerly, go into another ward, but remains in his own ward. Those who wear the oval badges on the right shoulder are called the twelves, from their number. They belong also to the mathematical school, but they are not on King Charles's foundation, they have their education from the endowment of a subsequent benefactor. They never were in any ward by themselves, but always remained in the wards where they were originally placed when they entered the school.

ROB. But have not the monitors any badge, or mark of distinction?

FATHER. Merely as monitors they have

not. But those monitors who are also markers wear a medal, having on one side a head of Edward VI. and on the other, a book displayed and surrounded with the words 'READ, MARK, LEARN.' This medal they wore on Sundays fastened to the button-hole of their coats with a piece of pale blue ribbon. And if they had been markers for one year or more previously to leaving the school, and had conducted themselves with general propriety, the head grammar-master used to present them with a similar medal of silver, having their name engraved on the edge of it.

ROB. But what do you mean by marker as distinguished from monitor?

FATHER. The monitors were appointed by the steward; there were two and sometimes three to each ward; and their business was to keep order in the ward, and to report to the steward such as were disorderly. But the markers were appointed by the upper grammar-master, and their

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business was on Sunday to hear the boys read the bible, and say their catechism, and psalms. These psalms, which the boys repeated on Sunday, were a selection from the old version in the prayer book, and were sung at prayer times in the ward and in the hall. As there were only two markers to each ward, though there were occasionally three monitors, it of course happened that there sometimes was a monitor who was not a marker. And formerly, I believe, it has happened that some elder boy in a ward has been high enough in the writing-school to be appointed a monitor, but who, having never been in the grammar-school at all, and being rather deficient in every thing else of education, has not been appointed a marker. Since the extension, however, of the advantages of the grammar-school to all the boys in the establishment, this evil has been avoided, and for the most part, I believe, it has been the practice for the steward to consult with the upper gram-

mar-master in making his arrangements and appointments.

GEO. Were you much in awe of the monitors?

FATHER. Very much; especially the younger boys: for the steward was generally in the habit of paying great attention to the complaints that were made by the monitors, and it was not easy to escape, if they accused or charged us with any misdemeanors.

GEO. But did the monitors ever make false accusations?

FATHER. Not altogether a false accusation perhaps, but they could, and sometimes did give rather a strong colouring, and the steward generally presumed that they were right.

ROB. I think that some of the little boys must have been very much oppressed by the bigger ones, especially by the monitors.

FATHER. From what I can recollect, there was not nearly so much of that kind

of oppression in the Blue-coat School as there is in many other public schools, where the system of fagging is adopted.

ROB. But had not the great boys and the monitors their fags?

FATHER. The monitors had in each ward one who was called the monitor's boy; but his task was not very laborious; it was considered rather a privilege, and the place was eagerly sought after. Among the other privileges that the monitor's boy enjoyed, he was permitted to sit up at night till the monitors went to bed, and if they had anything extraordinary for supper he generally partook of it with them. The Grecians also had each a boy to wait on him, and that was considered a more desirable situation than the place of monitor's boy, for the Grecians used generally to prefer one of the higher boys in the school, and if the boy was in the grammar-school, the Grecian, if at all good-humoured, was a kind of tutor to him. When I was in the school

I was a Grecian's boy for some years, and I received much valuable instruction from him.

ROB. What was the principal employment of the Grecian's boy?

FATHER. Most of the labour which he had to perform was, as far as I can recollect, to wash his tea-things and to set his room to rights.

GEO. And did not he also make his fire for him?

FATHER. No; for there were no fire-places in the Grecian studies.

GEO. It must have been very cold for them in the winter time.

FATHER. That it certainly was, but they were not compelled to sit in their studies longer than they pleased; for as they were but a kind of light closet, in the wards, they partook in some degree of the general warmth of the room, and were not intolerable, except in very cold weather.

ROB. But, father, you said that when you came to speak of the London school, you would tell us something more of your own personal history.

FATHER. I did so, and as far as I can recollect it I will. I was only nine years old when I first came from Hertford, and was rather forward for my age, and was sent, as I told you, into the upper grammar-school, which was then under the care of that capricious master, of whom I have spoken before. He might have been a very good master, some have said that he was, but I know that he was a very disagreeable one, and I shall never forget the terror with which I used to regard him. I was placed on the lowest form, and soon made acquaintance with the boys about me. We used to learn our lessons two together, having but one dictionary between us ; one of us used to look out the words in the dictionary, and the other made out if he could, or as well as he could, the mean-

ing of the sentences. And as in this lower form especially, it did not occupy all our time to learn the lessons which were set us, we used to amuse ourselves with a great deal of idle talk: it was not likely that two boys put together to learn their lessons should be exactly alike in their habits, so it frequently happened that if one was indolent, he would communicate the same spirit to the other. I remember very well, that it was a matter of controversy between me and my companion, which of us had spoiled the other.

GEO. But did not your master keep his eye upon you in school hours?

FATHER. He did so; but he had a great many to look after, and besides, as it was the custom for two of us to learn our lessons together, the master could not very distinctly make out whether we were learning our lessons or not, while we were talking together and turning over the leaves of the dictionary. Besides, as we

had to use grammars and dictionaries, there were many books on the desks at which we sat, and among these books it was not unusual to introduce some story book, which was very easily concealed, and so while we appeared to be learning our lessons, we were amusing ourselves with Robinson Crusoe or Jack the Giant Killer.

GEO. I think that was a very bad system. It would have been better for you to have learned your lessons by yourselves. But if you lost so much time, I wonder that your master did not set you longer lessons, so that you might not have any time to spare.

FATHER. Perhaps one reason why he did not do this was, that he could not then have found time to hear us all.

ROB. But according to systems now in use, one master can hear many more boys than were in the upper grammar-school in Christ's Hospital.

FATHER. He can so, and I believe that

the system in that school is now altered. There have been, as I have told you, many improvements, and of course the improvements have extended to the mode of instruction.

ROB. How long did you continue on this lower form? For if you lost so much of your time you could not make much progress.

FATHER. I continued on that form only six months, for at the examination that form was altogether done away with, some of the boys were removed to the writing-school, and the others, together with a detachment from the under grammar-school, were advanced to the form above, which was called the *Little Erasmus* form. In this form we continued to use the *Selecta è Profanis*, and added to that, *Ovid's Metamorphoses*. In this change my acquaintance increased; but I cannot say that my diligence was much greater. We had two lessons to say in the morning, and two in

the afternoon, but they were all very short. The first lessons, both for morning and afternoon, we used to call lessons by heart; they were from the Latin, and sometimes from the Greek grammar, occasionally a few lines from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to repeat without book. This we considered rather a difficult, or more properly speaking, a troublesome lesson: for the grammar lesson, that is, the Latin grammar, we had learned before, and our lessons of construing were acquired without much labour; but to commit a great number of Latin verses to memory required a considerable degree of application: and knowing this, and also knowing that the exertion of the memory was very useful to us, the master was always particularly strict at this lesson, and would not suffer any of us to escape it. You may very well suppose that we were glad enough when by any contrivance we could manage to escape it.

GEO. But how could you contrive to avoid saying your lesson?

FATHER. I can tell you how once I attempted to avoid it, and how rightly I was served for my pains. We had this lesson to say once or twice in the week, and we were directed to learn it on the preceding evening and not to trust to the morning; for our master knew that if we said it the very moment that we had first learned it, we should very shortly forget it. Now on one of the evenings on which I should have been employed in learning this lesson, I was otherwise engaged, and when morning came I did not feel disposed to that exertion which was necessary to commit the lines to memory in so short a space of time. I therefore, not knowing what the operation of tooth-drawing was, complained of a decayed tooth, and said that I wanted to have it drawn. Leave was accordingly granted and I went to Fleet-street, where the dentist resided, and had the tooth taken

out accordingly. Before the operation commenced I was sufficiently terrified by the sight of the apparatus, and I certainly suffered infinitely greater pain and inconvenience from the drawing of the tooth, than I should have suffered from the labour of learning my lesson.

GEO. You were sadly disappointed then in the exchange you made.

FATHER. Yes, but that was not all ; for on that morning the master had not had time to hear the lesson, and we were desired to repeat it the next morning instead ; so I was forced to learn it at last in spite of all my contrivances. I had, therefore, a very pretty illustration of the proverb, that lazy folks take the most pains.

ROB. And I suppose that you were pretty well laughed at by the other boys who knew of your contrivance.

FATHER. That of course you may well suppose.

GEO. Among so many boys there must have been a great number of mischievous tricks played.

FATHER. Not many I think in proportion to the number, for we were always well watched, and we knew that we were, and perhaps we also suspected that we were more watched than we really were. I have not the recollection of many tricks played while I was there ; but I remember to have heard that in past days, some of the great boys in one of the larger wards actually kept a donkey, which they used to take with them when they went to the New River to bathe in the holiday time.

ROB. I wonder the master and matron would allow it.

FATHER. You may wonder indeed ; but they did not know for a length of time ; and when it was known the steward had it sent away.

ROB. But where did they keep it, and how did they feed it?

FATHER. They kept it, I have heard, on the leads on the top of the ward, and they fed it with bread which they compelled the little boys to give out of their allowance. But one day the poor beast set up a hideous bray, and the secret was out.

GEO. I think that in those days the boys could not have been very closely watched.

FATHER. They certainly were not. The management now is very different from what it was then ; and the character of the school has altogether very much improved. You must recollect that I am only describing what I saw and heard when I was in the school, and that I am not giving you a statement of the establishment as it now is.

ROB. But it must have been very difficult to keep a sharp look out over so many boys at all times ; I think you had several different play-grounds.

FATHER. Yes ; the largest is that which is called the ditch ; it is so called, because formerly the city ditch ran through it, but for many years that has been arched over, and the play-ground still retains the name. Then there are the cloisters round the garden, and the garden, which has not been a garden for many years ; there were also the new cloisters under the writing-school ; but these are now nearly occupied by a building which has been recently erected for the purpose of providing the boys with accommodations to wash. And when I was in the school there was a place called the new play-ground, where the old grammar-school formerly stood. This ground has been partly taken up by the new hall ; but it is designed to open a space in front of the hall, which will make up for the ground that has been taken away.

GEO. I think you must have had plenty of room to play ; for when I have passed

through during play-hours, I have not noticed the boys as being at all in each other's way.

FATHER. Among so many boys there was, of course, a great variety of taste and inclination; they were not all desirous of the same amusement.

GEO. But had not you particular plays which were fashionable at certain times of the year?

FATHER. I am not sure that I recollect rightly, but I believe that, with the exception perhaps of marbles, there was not any periodical amusement, and there was plenty of room for that sport. We had different kinds of play in the different grounds. The ditch was most used for marbles, and in the new play-ground, as all the windows opening into it were covered with wire, we were allowed to play at ball. Round the cloisters the boys used to play at leap-frog, which has since been prohibited in consequence of some

accidents that have happened. The cloisters too, I remember, were a favourite place for playing at horses, and the new cloisters were used for whipping-tops. There was one very rough play which we sometimes pursued in the garden, and that was called '*headlings*.'

ROB. How was that played? I have never heard the word before.

FATHER. Very likely you have not; it was played with a ball which was thrown about from one to another, and the object was to give one another blows on the head with it. I have known some very serious blows given with a ball thus thrown; and the balls used for that purpose were for the most part very hard; quite as hard as those which are used for cricket, but not so large. The boys procured them from the Fleet prison, and they were called Fleet balls: they were made of pieces of woollen cloth, rolled up and fastened with packthread, or small string, and covered with white flannel.

They were most curiously made, for they were perfectly round, and so very hard that they would bear the roughest usage ; and when the original outside covering was worn out, the boys used to form a new one with a netting made with string. These are the balls with which the prisoners in the Fleet used to play at fives. Similar balls were procured from the King's-Bench, but they were covered with leather. This violent and indeed dangerous play is now discontinued ; I believe it was given up before I left the school.

GEO. I have often observed that the boys are not nearly all engaged in play ; many of them seem to amuse themselves with walking and talking with one another, especially the elder ones.

FATHER. Yes, that was a very favourite amusement with many of them. And very entertaining was the conversation in which they engaged. They amused themselves with talking about what they

should do when they should leave the school, and they looked upon life as something very different from what they have found it since. They also found very fruitful topics of conversation in telling of the wonders which they had seen and heard in the several parts of the country in which their friends might reside. In these conversations there was no doubt a plentiful share of exaggeration and romance ; and almost impossibilities were narrated with the seriousness of truth. But the most agreeable talk of all was that with which we were occasionally supplied by means of a novel or romance, obtained from a circulating library. We never thought whether the story was true or false, but we felt particularly interested in it ; and the characters, however ill drawn, we regarded as real and actual beings.

ROB. But if you were in the grammar-school, where you had to study classical books ; I suppose you would have most of

your amusement of a literary kind in history, I mean ancient history ?

FATHER. That, however, was not the case. We had the greatest interest in romances, especially those which had to do with the crusades, or the wars of the barons: for it was not till we had made some considerable progress in the grammar-school that we had much to do with ancient history: and then again, that which we read by stealth had greater charms for us than that which was in the regular course of our business. So delighted, I remember, we were with the tales of the wars of the barons, that several of us who were in the grammar-school amused ourselves with playing at castles.

ROB. That is a game which I have never heard of.

FATHER. We used to have this amusement on Saturday afternoons, when we had a half holiday. Then ten or a dozen or more would assemble in the upper

grammar-school, and divide ourselves into two parties, each constructing according to our means a castle at either end of the school-room. These castles principally consisted of the desks at which we sat in school hours, and which were fixed to the floor, and we constructed draw-bridges and portcullisses, and various fortifications, by the assistance of chairs, fenders, and fire irons, or any moveables that came to hand. And we experienced as much pleasure in the construction of these castles, as any gentleman or nobleman in the building of a magnificent mansion. We appointed the several officers as far as our knowledge extended, which was not very extensive, and I dare say not very correct. From these castles we would occasionally sally forth and battle it, on what we called the open plain; this open plain was the floor of the school-room. And sometimes we fought among the mountains, and these mountains we made in our imagination,

so representing two rows of desks one above the other ; and not unfrequently we enjoyed the great delight of storming a castle.

GEO. What weapons did they fight with ?

FATHER. Our weapons were for the most part wooden swords and shields. The boys generally made their own arms, and were exceedingly proud of the dexterity with which they formed them. The swords were generally of the shape of a scymetar, and sometimes resembling a sabre. The blades of the swords were rubbed over with black lead to give them a metallic appearance. The shields were of wood, or of covers of old books, and they were painted with various devices ; and our battles for the greater part were only the striking of our swords against our adversaries' shields ; and we quite as much enjoyed the display of our arms, as we did the agitations of our conflicts.

ROB. Had you no helmets?

FATHER. No; but I remember that several efforts were made to accomplish that desirable object. They failed however, for want of knowledge, and for want of materials. Several of us had an idea that we could make ourselves a complete suit of armour with pasteboard; and for that purpose we paid frequent visits to the Tower.

ROB. What! to the Tower of London, where the wild beasts and armouries are kept?

FATHER. Yes; for we were permitted on holidays to see the Tower, provided we waited to go round with any party that might come for the purpose; and you may now, I believe, see some of the boys of the Blue-coat School waiting at the tower gates to go round with a party. It was the inspection of these armouries that contributed, together with reading romances, to keep up the spirit of chivalry in our minds.

ROB. And did you learn anything from the sight of the armour there.

FATHER. Not enough to be of any great assistance. There were so many, and such various objects to distract our attention, that we could not attend sufficiently to any one. I have no recollection of any deliberate attempt to construct our paste-board armour, I only know that it was a long while desired and meditated and talked about, but in the lapse of time our passion for this amusement declined.

GEO. Did you not ever amuse yourselves with playing at ships; for I think that I have heard you say something to that purpose?

FATHER. You have; but that was rather an irregularity; for when the master had left the school in the morning to go to his breakfast, and when the Grecians also had gone out to their breakfast, some few of us who ought, in the absence of the master and the Grecians, to have kept order and

quietness, took advantage of the interval, and left the school in disorder while we went to play at ships. There was no great wit in the play, but the pleasure of it was, that it was done by stealth.

ROB. How did you manage your play.

FATHER. We hopped about on one leg with our arms folded across the chest, and that we called sailing; and when two ships met there was an engagement, which was managed by our bounding against each other till one was thrown down, or had set his other foot to the ground, and then that was called striking, and the ship was captured accordingly. During the time that I was at the school, you know that the English and the French were at war; and many celebrated naval victories were obtained by the English over the French, and this gave us an interest in any thing relating to the sea or naval affairs.

GEO. Had you often opportunities of going upon the water?

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FATHER. We were very often on the Thames, sometimes with our friends, and sometimes by ourselves. When I was in the school, it was no uncommon thing for two or three of us to hire a boat with a sail or without, and take an excursion up the river as far as Battersea or Putney.

ROB. Why, you would not let us do so.

FATHER. That I certainly would not; for I think that young persons ought not to be trusted on the water, without some person being with them who understands the management of a boat. I do not remember to have heard of any accident ever happening to any of the boys from their going upon the water, though certainly they did run great risks, especially when they used a sail, which they always would if they could, and it was less labour and more amusing than the toil of rowing. I remember going up the river as far as Chelsea in a little skiff, with a sail to it. The tide was coming in, and there was a

brisk wind blowing up the river. We set our sail to catch as much of the wind as possible, and were mightily pleased at bringing the edge of the boat close to the water. My companion would willingly have let the boat drive against the piers of Westminster bridge, and I had much difficulty to persuade him to give up his humour. When we arrived at Chelsea it was time that we should direct our course homewards; but the wind was against us, so that we could not sail back, and the tide was against us, so that we could not row back, without much more labour than in the frolic of our holiday we were willing to take. We therefore disembarked, and walked home, leaving the boat to find its way back to the owner as it might; for the owner's name and place of abode was painted upon it.

GEO. And was no complaint made against you at school for so doing?

FATHER. I never heard that there was;

and indeed most likely there was not; for our names were not known by the man of whom we hired the boat, and he could not perhaps have readily selected us by person from amongst so many; and, indeed, what is most probable, he might be conscious that he had acted wrongly in trusting two such boys with a boat.

CHAP. IV.

ROB. You have been telling us of your going on the water in boats by yourselves; were you allowed to go into the water by yourselves?

FATHER. We were when I was in the school, but I believe that is altered now. But though we went by ourselves, we went in such numbers, and to places generally safe, and many of them were such good swimmers, that no accident ever happened. We used to bathe in the New River, and sometimes we spent a whole day, from seven in the morning till seven in the evening, in this sport.

ROB. How that could be? You could not possibly be in the water so long.

FATHER. No, we were not all day in the water, but we certainly were the greatest part of the day; the plan was this. At breakfast, if it were on a whole-day leave, or at dinner if it were a half-day leave, the monitors of the ward used to collect the names of those who wished to go to the New River, and then hand up the lists to the steward who gave leave accordingly, unless there was any particular objection or impediment. If they were going for a whole day, which was often the case in the August holidays, they would take some provisions with them, of bread and cheese, or of something they might purchase in going along, if they had money with them. There were several parts of the river in which they used to bathe, and they generally, especially on a whole holiday, visited every one.

The first place was called Newington, though I rather think that it was in Islington; but, whenever we went to the New River,

it was always called going to Newington. It was indispensable that every one should bathe at this first place, for there was great variety of depth, so that the very least might paddle about in the water as long as he pleased, and not be out of his depth, while those who could swim, had the enjoyment of deeper water, and that at a very short distance, so that the party was not separated. If any boy from timidity or disinclination hesitated about going into the water at this place, the others without a moment's hesitation, or the smallest compunction, would immediately proceed to strip him, and throw him in ; and if any one of the younger boys quitted the water sooner than was thought right, he would be taken up by the legs and arms, and thrown in again ; and it was generally thought advisable to take all this in good part, as a matter of unavoidable necessity.

When they had amused themselves here as long as they felt disposed, they hastily

and partly dressed themselves, and proceeded up the river side, to a bridge called the hundred and eighty-seventh. Here the water was somewhat deeper, and none went in but those who could swim, and a very short time was spent at this bridge. Further on was another bridge, at which the water was not deep, so that those who could not swim might amuse themselves with diving from the bridge. Then came one more bridge, at which a short stay was made, and lastly the party reached what is called the dark arch: this is a part of the river which runs under-ground, in a sort of tunnel, for a distance of about fifty or sixty yards or more, for I am speaking from memory. The water is deeper here than in most parts of the river, and as the channel is narrower, the current is stronger. The younger ones, and those who cannot swim, are not expected, or indeed wished, to go into the water at this place; for as the water is out of their depth they would

be troublesome to the others. Some of the party go to the upper end of the dark arch, and plunging in, swim all the way through with the current; others not so bold or expert, amuse themselves with merely diving off the arch and swimming about at the opening or going a few yards underneath against the current. He that at one of these excursions accomplishes the task of swimming for the first time under the dark arch, has something to talk about and to be proud of for a long time, till some of his juniors accomplish the same task, and then he thinks lightly of it, and undervalues it.

GEO. How tired the boys must be after such a day as you have described.

FATHER. Tired enough no doubt; but it is good for young people to feel a little fatigue. There was, however, something objectionable in our wandering about in this gypsy-like manner, and therefore this plan has been abolished, and a more orderly arrangement has been made, by

sending those who wish to bathe, to some regular pleasure bath, and by putting the whole party under the superintendence of one or two of the beadles.

ROB. Now you have been speaking of your summer amusement of bathing, how did you manage your winter amusement of skating and sliding? I think I remember seeing the boys skating, though I do not recollect any piece of water that could be frozen over.

FATHER. You may perhaps have seen them skating and sliding in the garden. There is no water there, but on frosty nights the boys used to take the large tubs which were used formerly for washing, and pour water down at the several corners, so that ice enough was formed for a slide. The skating was very imperfect, for that was mostly on the trodden snow.

GEO. It seems that you had plenty of recreation and play.

FATHER. They who were disposed to

amuse themselves with play in their out of school hours, had plenty of time for so doing, and those who were disposed to read, and could furnish themselves with books, had also abundant opportunities for so amusing themselves.

ROB. You were saying just now that you had liberty to go and see the curiosities in the tower; had you permission to go free of charge to any other place of exhibition?

FATHER. Only, I believe, to the Shakspeare-gallery in Pall Mall, which permission was granted to us by Alderman Boydell. The pictures of that collection are now removed and dispersed. Boys, so young as we for the most part were, do not care much for the fine arts; but I recollect being very much pleased with visits to that gallery; and it was a very pleasant rest to us, when we amused ourselves, as we sometimes did, with a ramble to the parks and the west end of the town.

I have seen a party of five or six boys, who had been rambling in the parks, sitting on a bench before the fire at the latter part of the day, when the rooms were nearly empty, and regaling themselves with such provisions as they had carried out with them, or procured on their journey. It was not treating the fine arts with much respect, to make an eating-house of the Shakspeare-gallery.

GEO. You seem to have had many ways of making your holidays agreeable, and you had, I think, a great many more holidays than boys have in general.

FATHER. We never thought that we had too many ; but you are not to suppose that our holidays were generally spent in these excursions and ramblings. A great proportion of the boys had friends or relations in or near London, whom they visited on these occasions. And those who were not so fortunate had acquaintances among the boys, by whom they were introduced to some friend or other.

ROB. How far were you allowed to go when you had a whole day's leave?

FATHER. As far as we pleased, provided that we were home again in proper time. In summer we were allowed to stay out till eight, and in the winter we were required to be home by six. When we went out for a whole day's leave, we went at seven in the morning, having had our breakfast at half-past six: but in winter we were an hour later. If any of the boys had friends to visit, at a distance of six or seven miles, they were indulged, if they pleased to go before breakfast, with permission to go at six in the morning in summer, and at seven in the winter.

ROB. And suppose you did not come home till after the time fixed?

FATHER. If we were only three or four minutes, no notice was taken of it unless we were habitually so late. But all who were as much as ten minutes too late, had their names taken down, first, at the gates

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by the porter or beadle, and then in the ward, by the nurse or the monitor. And these names were handed up to the steward, who kept us at home part of the next leave day, in proportion to our transgression, and according to our general behaviour. He that had been ten minutes too late, was stopped an hour; for twenty minutes or half an hour, he was detained two or three hours, and if any one was nearly an hour beyond the time, he was stopped the whole day at home.

GEO. That is why the boys are so often seen in the evening running and driving along so fast. They seem in such a hurry, I should have imagined that they dreaded some severer punishment than being kept at home for an hour or two.

FATHER. Why, that is punishment enough, for it frequently spoils the arrangement of the holiday. And it is very dull and disagreeable to be waiting about in an almost empty place, when all the

others are gone out. It would not be so much a punishment, were it not for the circumstance of the others being away. We were also exceedingly proud of boasting in how short a time we could get home from any given distance ; and for the most part, we never thought of starting till the very last minute ; so that we could get in just in time. It is curious to see what numbers at the close of a holiday are all returning and entering the gates at the same minute, from so many distant, and different parts. In some instances, the boys' friends or parents come with them, and then they are brought home perhaps not quite at the same moment.

ROB. I have seer some of them several miles from town towards evening, and I have wondered how they could get back before dark. How very tired they must be, going all that distance, so fast as they go, for they seem to be always running in the evening.

FATHER. They are not so tired in the evening, but that when they go to bed they can lie awake, and talk of what they have seen, heard, and done, in the course of the day.

ROB. Are they allowed to talk in bed?

FATHER. Certainly they are not allowed to talk; but when they used to lie two in a bed, it was not very easy to prevent them.

GEO. And suppose they did talk and make a noise in bed, would the monitors beat them?

FATHER. Occasionally the monitors would take that liberty with some of the younger ones, but the usual plan was, to send them to the stone, which is an expression that needs explanation.

GEO. That it certainly does to me, for I cannot imagine what it means.

FATHER. In the middle of the floor of the hall, there was inserted a flat paving-stone, on which, or about which, those

boys who had behaved ill in their wards, were put to stand at breakfast time. In the course of an evening, especially of the evening which followed a leave-day, there was generally a great deal of talking in bed, and the monitors would call out to the parties thus transgressing, and tell them to go to the stone. So that in the morning there might be seen standing in the middle of the hall, thirty or forty from the different wards; but just before the steward made his appearance in the hall, the monitors who had a little relented, would revoke their sentence in many cases; so that of a great number who had been sent to the stone, scarcely two or three would remain. These stood there during the morning prayer, and then when the boys were at breakfast, the monitors would make their respective complaints to the steward, who punished the culprit according to the degree of his demerit. This standing at the stone was sometimes made part of a punishment,

and was a species of pillory where the transgressor was exhibited.

ROB. Was he fixed or fastened there ?

FATHER. No, he was not fastened there ; but he was made to stand there to be looked at. Now, for instance, if any boy had been so careless and slovenly as to neglect to have his shoes mended when they needed it, then he was set at the stone with his shoes in his hand, and he was compelled to hold them up during the whole of the time the boys were at their breakfast or dinner. And sometimes I have seen a boy stand there with a penknife in his hand ; for in order to prevent accidents, we were never allowed to have a knife with a sharp point to it ; for if our friends ever gave us such instruments, we were required immediately to break the point off ; and if we were discovered to have pointed knives in our possession, we were thus set at the stone, with the knife held up in our hand. Or if a boy at any meal made his

appearance with dirty hands, he was set there holding his hands up.

ROB. You just now said that if a boy staid out on a leave day an hour after his time, he was detained at home the whole of his next holiday ; but suppose that he was much later than that, or that he did not come home all night.

FATHER. If he were very late, then perhaps he would be kept at home for two holidays instead of one ; but if he stayed out all night, unless he could give a very satisfactory account of himself, he would be considered as a runaway.

GEO. Did the boys ever run away from the school ?

FATHER. During the earlier part of the time that I was in the London school, there were many instances of boys running away.

ROB. But where did they go to, and what did they do : — How could they conceal themselves ?

FATHER. That indeed I can hardly tell you ; they were mostly found and brought back in a day or two. Those whom I remember as runaways were in the King's ward and mathematical school, and I believe their running away was merely a little piece of affected bravado. I have indeed heard of some strange adventures, and odd disguises of some of them ; and I recollect, though but indistinctly, seeing one or two in the miserable plight into which they had put themselves, by disfiguring and altering their clothes.

GEO. These runaways, I suppose, were very severely punished.

FATHER. They were so ; and besides the castigation which they received, they were for a long time subject to heavy penances and mortifications. They were not allowed liberty for play or exercise, but were shut up during play hours in a small closet or dungeon ; and at night they had a wooden gate fixed up to their bed, so that

they were locked into a kind of cage. Sometimes their coats, which were lined with yellow, were turned the wrong side outwards, or they had a large R cut out of scarlet or yellow cloth and fastened to their backs: their hair also was sometimes cut close to their heads, or otherwise cut in so awkward and grotesque a manner as to make them look quite ridiculous.

ROB. How very mortifying and humiliating all this must have been.

FATHER. It was intended so to be, and no doubt to some few it really was so; but I know that there were some who were so hardened as almost to glory in it, and to regard themselves as brave fellows for undergoing it; and I have a recollection that some of the younger and more timid boys looked up with more admiration and astonishment than any other feeling to these marked ones.

GEO. But would it not have been better to turn them out of the school at once?

FATHER. That was occasionally done, when any were very hardened and obstinate indeed. The manner of expulsion was managed with great harshness. The culprit was first very severely flogged by the porter, and then an ill-looking dress was put upon him, consisting of a striped cotton cap and a striped close jacket, like those worn by lamplighters, and in this dress he was led down the hall and indignantly thrust out at the gates, where some friend, if he had one, or otherwise a parish officer, was waiting to receive him.

ROB. The little boys then could not look with any admiration upon one so turned out.

FATHER. Certainly they could not; the ridiculous and humiliating dress made all the difference.

GEO. We have been asking you questions which have led you on from one thing to another, and have hardly suffered you to go on regularly with your own history.

FATHER. It has been quite as well that you have asked questions as they have occurred to you, and that I have answered them when you have asked them, for by that means the information which I have given you is more likely to keep in your memory; and indeed the only way in which I can tell you of myself, is by telling you what I saw and knew.

ROB. You said that you were sent into the grammar-school when you came from Hertford; did you remain there all the time you were in the establishment?

FATHER. I did not; for when I was eleven years old I was removed into the writing-school, which was not a very agreeable change to me. I was not indeed very partial to application, but still in learning Latin and Greek lessons I found some amusement; in arithmetic and in writing I found none.

GEO. Had you more to do in the writing-school than you had in the grammar-school?

FATHER. We had much less to do in the writing-school than we had in the grammar-school ; but to those who do not like work, the least portion of it is more than enough, while to those who do, the greatest portion is not too much. I was also mortified at going into the writing-school, because I thereby held a lower rank in the ward, and was under the necessity of sitting in a lower place at table ; for I could not write nearly well enough to take a place in the writing-school by any means equal in rank to that which I held in the grammar-school.

Again I was mortified, because by being in the writing-school and holding a low situation, there I was subject to be appointed to humiliating offices, from which boys in the upper grammar-school are exempt ; and as I was not a very great favourite with my nurse, she soon took the opportunity of appointing me to the office of jack-boy, an office neither of honour nor

emolument. I recollect to this day how deeply I felt the degradation. The office of the jack-boy is to take the leather jacks which contain the beer, to be filled at the buttery, and then to pour the same beer into the wooden piggins out of which the boys drink. The office of cup-bearer has in some instances been considered not dishonourable; but then, I suppose, it depends very much on what the cup is made of, what it contains, and for whom it is poured out.

But my mortifications did not end here. The boys of the lower forms in the writing-school were also employed to sweep and wash the wards. They were called '*ward tenders*' or '*attenders*.' I would willingly have given any laborious and painful attention to the study of Greek or Latin, to avoid this menial office. Every Saturday, too, the boys in the writing-school, among the lower classes, were employed to sweep out the school, and a most disagreeable task

it was. The room was very large, and the floor very old, and covered almost all with desks and forms, so that we had to creep upon our knees and drive the dust and rubbish before us with hand brushes, after having previously sprinkled the floor, to abate a little the nuisance of the dust. You may easily imagine that there was dirt and litter enough collected in the course of a week in a boy's writing-school; and there was not only the mortification, and the inconvenience, and the trouble, but there was the loss of a pleasant half-holiday; for while I was labouring and toiling with my fellow-sufferers, I heard the voices of the others at play, free and happy; and most bitter of all, was the recollection of the many Saturday-afternoons that I had enjoyed in the grammar-school, playing at castles, or reading something that savoured of literature.

GEO. But why did you not strive to get forward in writing, so as to take a higher place in the school?

FATHER. You may well ask me that question, but I cannot so well answer it. The truth is, that by having so little to do, and that little being so easily done when set about, that I sadly neglected it, and did not only make no advances, but absolutely went back. The quantity which we had to do in the course of the day was six copies and two sides of ciphering; and as we were in school eight hours, there was a great abundance of time allowed for doing this work. The monitor of each form used to put his mark on the writing and ciphering books, that our portion might be measured out; and so very lenient was the system, that what was not done one day might be done on another. If in the morning when the monitor marked our books, it was found that we had not written the full quantity the preceding day, then it was said that we owed so many copies or so many sides of ciphering; and by mere indolence these debts would some-

times increase and accumulate to a most enormous degree ; for there was no time fixed for making up the deficiencies. I remember to have owed twenty sides of ciphering, and almost twice as many copies.

ROB. But what could you do with your time ?

FATHER. I can scarcely recollect ; but I know that it must have been sadly lost, and I have frequently had occasion since to regret that it was so lost. Indolent people never know what they have done with their time ; they merely know that it has gone away, and that it has passed unpleasantly and unprofitably. That was clearly a great defect in the system, which allowed so much indolence to pass unchecked and uncorrected. I have no doubt that it is now differently managed. My indolence, though not punished by the master, was itself punishment enough. I was always uncomfortable during the time

that I was in the writing-school, and when the severe little master of the upper grammar-school and another was appointed in his place, I caused an application to be made to return to the grammar-school, and was successful.

ROB. How long did you remain in the writing-school?

FATHER. I was there for nearly two years; and in that time I lost much ground in the grammar-school, and had acquired habits of indolence which I could not easily shake off. But the new grammar-master was an intelligent and attentive man, exceedingly well calculated for his situation, and taking an interest in the improvement of his pupils. And though by returning to the grammar-school, I found that I had much more to do than I had in the writing-school, and that I could not by any means or contrivances escape from the labour, I was made much happier by the change.

GEO. And yet was there not some mor-

tification in seeing those before you, who had been your equals, and others equal with you, who had been below you?

FATHER. It was so indeed, but I had a little abatement of this feeling in the pleasant thought of the many advantages which I had gained by the change, and not only so, but I soon found that I had not forgotten quite so much as might have been expected; and, therefore, I made some little advances, though not quite so much as to reach that point from which I had been removed.

ROB. But, to take you back to the writing-school, were there no examinations by which your progress in writing and arithmetic might be discovered?

FATHER. There were two examinations every year, one in the spring, and the other in autumn. They were called examinations, but they were, more properly speaking, exhibitions. Previously to what was called the examination, we were set to

write out copies or pieces upon finer paper than ordinary, and these copies or pieces were written with especial care and attention, and they were submitted to the master or usher; if not done as well as he thought they might be, they were rejected and re-written, till he thought we had done our best. Those boys who could write very well, wrote large and ornamented pieces, embellished with much flourishing, and fancy writing; and some of these pieces were certainly written in a very superior manner. But the boys on the lower forms wrote merely copies on a quarter of a sheet of paper. All these writings were spread out upon the tables in the hall, and the governors, masters, and visitors, were admitted to inspect them. Of course, very little attention would be paid to any but those which could be spoken of with approbation. There was also an exhibition at the same time, of drawings mostly done by the boys of the mathemati-

cal school. The drawing school was designed principally for them; but there was now and then, by special indulgence, a boy or two from other schools in the drawing school.

GEO. And were there any prizes given to the best writer?

FATHER. There was a prize of a silver pen for the best writer, and a prize of a silver medal for the best accountant; besides several smaller medals for a few others who had distinguished themselves. The arithmetical examination was only of those who were candidates for the prizes, the rest underwent no examination, as far as I can recollect.

GEO. What was the nature of your grammar-school examination?

FATHER. That consisted merely of some Greek and Latin lessons being learnt, and rehearsed with great care; and certain exercises carefully written and revised. These lessons were said, and these exercises

shewn, to the head master of St. Paul's school.

ROB. Were there not also some speeches delivered at the examination?

FATHER. Not on the examination day, but on the 21st of September, which was called 'Speech-day,' and a day of great importance it was.

In the morning, it being St. Matthew's day, there was service at Christ's-Church, which was attended by the Lord Mayor and aldermen, and the governors, and the boys. A sermon was preached by appointment of the governors by a young clergyman who had recently taken orders, and who had been brought up in the school. The boys after Church-time, had leave to visit their friends. But the Grecians adjourned to the great hall, and there in presence of the Lord Mayor, alderman, governors, and masters, and a large audience, they delivered their speeches.

GEO. What speeches were they? Were they taken from Cicero or Demosthenes?

FATHER. No, my dear boy, the speeches were not learnt by rote, but they were composed by the persons that delivered them, and they had reference to the institution in which these young men had been educated. There were but two speeches; one in English by the head Grecian, who was just leaving school for the University, and the other in Latin by the second Grecian, who on the following year would have to pronounce the English speech.

ROB. What was the subject of the speeches?

FATHER. The subject was a general declamation in praise of the charitable institutions in the city of London, and more especially of Christ's Hospital, with thanks on the part of the speakers for the benefits which they had derived from the institution, and a reference by the senior, who was just leaving the school, to the prospects before him in the University.

ROB. So there was no Greek speech;

I almost wonder at that, it would have sounded so grand, especially from those who were called Grecians.

FATHER. It might have sounded grand, but nobody would have understood it, or at least so very small a number, that it must have been wearying to speaker and hearers too. Besides, if it had been composed by the young men it must have been a very imperfect composition, and if it had been only learned by rote out of Demosthenes, it would have been by no means appropriate to the occasion, and after all would have been nothing more than many of the younger boys could have done quite as well.

After the speeches had been delivered, a glove was carried round the room, and the company contributed to form a purse, to help to defray the expenses of the youth who was leaving school for the University.

GEO. But was not that letting themselves down to receive contributions?

FATHER. How so my boy? Don't you know that their whole maintenance and education had been gratuitous, and an act of charity? The practice of the Eton Montem is far more humiliating, and the mode of collecting money on that occasion is far more objectionable.

ROB. Yes, that it is, I know, from what I read of it the other day. But you have not yet told us of the examinations or exhibitions of those boys who belong to the mathematical school, and are brought up for the sea.

FATHER. The examination was not quite so public as that of the other boys. It was taken by the elder brethren of the Trinity-house, and consisted of enquiries concerning the progress which the boys had made in mathematical acquirements. The examination was only of the first order, or first class, and was taken twice a year. As the mathematical school was one of peculiar royal foundation, having been

founded by Charles the Second, there was annually a presentation of the boys of that school at St. James's, when of course they were fitted with every thing new and fresh, and not less important was their visit to St. James's palace, than were the speeches of the Grecians in the hall in presence of the Lord Mayor and Aldermen. This presentation at court used to be on the Queen's birth day ; but of late years, the practice has been discontinued : it was laid aside on occasion of the illness of the late king.

GEO. You have said that only one went annually to Cambridge. How many were sent out of the mathematical school for the sea-service.

FATHER. From the mathematical school ten were sent out in the course of the year : five in spring, and five in autumn. And they were fitted out at the expense of the establishment, with clothing and books, and mathematical instruments. So you observe

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that, although some for their very ill behaviour are dismissed with great ignominy and disgrace, as in the case of the runaways, yet those who behave well are not forgotten.

ROB. Are all the boys, who behave well, fitted out on their discharge from the school in the same manner, according to their respective occupations?

FATHER. Not all. There is however some little for all. The Grecians who go to the University are most liberally provided for. They who go to Cambridge have an exhibition of sixty pounds a year for four years, and those who go to Oxford, of which there is only one in seven years, have an exhibition of seventy pounds a year for four years. The establishment also pays their entrance fees, gives them a certain sum towards paying for the furniture of their college rooms, and something more for clothes and books. And those who go to Cambridge, if they are entered at Pem-

broke-Hall, as is most usually the case, have some further advantage which raises their exhibition to ninety pounds a year for the four years. And then, if they are studious, and take a high degree, they are very well provided for by fellowships or tutorships.

ROB. And what provision is made for those who are not sent to the University, or brought up for the sea-service?

FATHER. Very little; yet perhaps as much as can be expected. The Grecians, you observe, are better provided for than the rest, because they could not become Grecians unless their conduct had been very correct, and their application to learning diligent and close. The great majority of the boys receive from the Hospital, if they are bound apprentice to any business, the sum of five pounds, which now is not so much as at the time when it was allotted. There is also a further sum of five, ten, or fifteen pounds when they have completed

the term of their apprenticeship. This they receive upon application at the counting house, and upon testimonials being produced that they have served their time faithfully and truly to the satisfaction of their masters. As there is a specific sum left for the purpose, the amount is proportioned to the number of applicants. It sometimes amounts to as much as twenty pounds, but is never less than five : and if there is not enough to give five pounds to each of those who apply, the money is distributed alphabetically as far as it will go in sums of five pounds, and those who are unsuccessful wait till the following year.

GEO. But the largest sum is not sufficient to set any one up in business.

FATHER. No indeed, it is not ; nor was it ever thought to be so ; but to an industrious young man just out of his apprenticeship it may be serviceable. But the number of those who went apprentices was not very great. It was the almost universal

ambition of those, who did not go to sea or to college, to be placed as clerks in Merchants' counting-houses: and many have from such beginnings succeeded remarkably well in the world. As the boys in that school were generally considered good writers, and good arithmeticians, merchants and others who were in want of clerks would frequently apply for them there. Persons in business who wanted apprentices, used to make application to the steward at the boy's dinner time, and the steward used publicly to announce that a person was at the gate in want of an apprentice: and then those boys who felt inclined to the business, went to speak to the applicant. And as some of the boys left the school at fourteen years old, though they were allowed to remain till fifteen, they were generally during the last year catching at opportunities for leaving. But with all that, there were not many answers to applications for apprentices.

ROB. Did the boys who had left the school keep up much acquaintance with those who remained in it?

FATHER. Yes. They were very proud of shewing themselves again to their old schoolfellows, especially if they were in a situation that enabled them to dress well. They felt themselves to have made a great step in life by their change of dress, and by entering into the world. And they thought themselves very condescending to notice their old schoolfellows. On the nights of the public suppers, there used to be a great number of young men present, who had but recently left the school, and they were gratified by exhibiting themselves as gentlemen at large, to those who yet remained under the restraints and discipline of pupillage. But there were many who felt ashamed of having been brought up in a school which was a charitable foundation, and they avoided all mention of the place, and seldom were seen again there;

and even avoided speaking to their former companions if by any chance they met them in the streets.

GEO. But the Blue-coat school is not like a common charity school.

FATHER. It certainly is not: for the education which is there given is quite equal to that which is given in any of the great schools in the kingdom.

ROR. Are the boys then taught every thing that is taught in other schools? I thought that they did not learn French and dancing.

FATHER. They did not: but they learnt what was more useful to them, and they were instructed in all that was taught in the great public schools. In some of the public schools, and I believe in most, the pupils are instructed only in Latin and Greek; and whatever other knowledge they acquire is provided especially for them by their friends. I recollect now the great care and attention with which the master

of the upper Grammar-School used to teach us Geography. It was not so much a task as an amusement. And while we were learning what was called Geography, we became possessed of a considerable share of general knowledge. We were not taught by rote out of books, but we had Guthrie's Geography, which was then considered the best, and we had a lecture delivered to us by the upper boys who had gone through the course before; and then we afterwards, according to the best of our recollection and ability, repeated the same to the master, who gave us some additional information. For instance, suppose that the subject of the lesson or lecture was the map of England. First we were to state in what degrees of latitude and longitude it was situated, and how long and how broad it was. Then the boundaries were mentioned; and the divisions and the names of the principal towns in each county: next the rivers in their several courses, and the towns

which stood upon their banks: then the mountains, their relative height, character and situation. We next were to say what was the nature of the climate and soil, and what the production of the soil of every description. We were also instructed as to the mode of working the mines, and of the uses to which the various mineral productions were applied. Concerning the manufactures of the kingdom, we were particularly informed, and it was required that we should write down in a book a description of the principal manufactures, such as woollen, cotton, iron, and so forth. Then there was given to us an account of the trade of England; of the countries with which it had commercial intercourse; of the various articles imported and exported; and of the various conditions and particularities of each trade. We were told also of the government of the country, civil and ecclesiastical, of its military and naval power, and in short we had given to us a general and comprehensive view of

what belonged to each country, upon the face of the earth, so far as was necessary to enable us to form some idea of the world. And this knowledge was far more valuable to us than being taught to dance. As it was communicated to us by word of mouth, and not by the means of printed books, I think it made a deeper impression upon us.

GEO. Did that fierce little man that you spoke of as the upper grammar-master, when you first went into the school, take all the pains to make the geography lessons so pleasant and instructive?

FATHER. He did so; and on those occasions he was agreeable enough, and we noticed it so much the more because it was so different from his usual habits. He could indeed occasionally be very pleasant and good-humoured, but he was so very capricious and changeable, that we could not depend upon his good-humour.

ROB. If any of you happened to be ill, were you sent home to your friends?

FATHER. The boys were never sent

away on account of illness, unless there was a necessity for change of air. There is a very excellent infirmary connected with the establishment, and no attention that could be paid to the sick was ever omitted or neglected. When I was in the school, and I suppose it is the same now, there was a resident apothecary, and there was a matron, or nurse, with suitable servants or assistants. The very slightest illness was never neglected. And as young persons are not always ready to complain of, or even to acknowledge sickness, the apothecary used at intervals to inspect them all, and when any one appeared not quite well, he would set him on one side to examine him more particularly, after he had made his general examination. Those that were in the infirmary, were very particularly and carefully attended to. There was not merely the resident apothecary, but there were also belonging to the establishment a physician and a surgeon who made

their visits occasionally, and, when there was necessity for it, they came daily or even more frequently. The boys who were in the infirmary were allowed also such diet as the medical attendants thought fit for them; but when they did not require any peculiar change, they had the same as the other boys. And as great care was taken that every one who was at all indisposed should be sent into the infirmary, as much care was also taken that none should be returned back from it, but such as were perfectly recovered. It became, therefore, to such as were indolently disposed, a kind of holiday; but generally speaking they were glad to return to school, after a suspension of occupation; for there is scarcely any labour so wearisome as indolence.

ROB. But sometimes there might be necessity for medical assistance when there was no occasion for being laid aside altogether, such for instance as a cough in the winter. Were all those who had coughs sent to the infirmary?

FATHER. They were not: for occasionally there might be two or three hundred so afflicted, some more and some less. Those, therefore, who were troubled with coughs used to go every evening after supper down to the infirmary, where they had a dose of emulsion; and as this mixture was very pleasant to the palate, and as by going to the infirmary together in considerable numbers in the evening, afforded an opportunity for some fun, the number of those who had coughs became at one time very great. The then resident apothecary observing this and suspecting the truth, hit upon a plan to put a stop to it; and one night instead of leaving the emulsion to be administered by one of the nurse's assistants, as was usually the case, he attended personally and when we were all in the room together, he ordered the door at which we entered to be fastened, and he stood at the other door at the farther extremity of the room, and made every one of us take a

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large dose of some very nauseous medicine, which no doubt contained something that was good for a cough and nothing that could be at all injurious to us. The scheme had its desired effect, for the next night there was not one half of the number who fancied that they wanted any remedy for a cough ; it cured them most effectually. This apothecary was a very humourous kind of a man, and he was very severe upon those who pretended illness to escape from school. I have heard of his keeping one of them in bed three or four days with a blister upon his back, and making him swallow the most nauseous medicines that could be compounded. Whether or not the story was true, I cannot say, but the belief of it had its effect. I recollect very clearly one specimen of his humour. The infirmary, as it then was, consisted of three sides of a square and in the middle was a small open space, which extending somewhat beyond the building, afforded a kind of play ground

for such as were convalescent. We could not very well engage in our more ordinary kinds of play for want of room and of a sufficient number of play fellows; therefore we were in the habit of amusing ourselves in various modes, and some of them not the most rational. Now when the apothecary saw any one of the boys amusing himself in what was thought an improper manner, he would make the boy as a punishment continue at the said amusement for an hour or two. And one day when the coal cellar, which had a small circular opening into the yard, happened to be open, the Apothecary saw one of the boys standing with his head just peeping out at this aperture, and enjoying it very heartily: the poor boy was ordered to remain in that attitude for a whole hour, a very ludicrous punishment, but a very troublesome one, I dare say, to the party concerned. It was not very pleasant for him to be laughed at by all the rest of his companions, and it

was at his peril to leave the place before he had permission so to do.

ROB. A very curious punishment indeed; but though it was not very pleasant to stand as that boy did, yet there might be some to whom it would be no punishment to continue for an hour at the same amusement.

FATHER. It might be no punishment to continue at the amusement, but it would be a punishment to be compelled to do so.

GEO. But you have not yet told us of your processions at Easter.

FATHER. Our processions at Easter were two, Monday and Tuesday. Some years before my time, they used to occupy three days, and the boys used upon that occasion, to attend at St. Bride's church; but some inconvenience being found to rise from that arrangement they have for many years past attended at Christ Church. The week immediately preceding Easter week was called clothing week; for in that week we attended at the wardrobe to receive our

new clothes, which we wore on Easter Sunday and Monday and Tuesday, and which were then laid aside till Whitsuntide. Easter Sunday was the last of our supping in public, and on that occasion a new anthem composed by the upper grammar-master, was sung by the boys in the hall, and again on Sunday and Monday and Tuesday, at church. Our procession on Monday was from the school to the Royal Exchange, and then back to church. The boys on that occasion wore their best clothes, and had a piece of paper with the words 'HE IS RISEN,' pinned on the left side of the coat. Many of them used to provide themselves with nosegays, or with single roses. They were first marshalled and arranged in the hall in the following order: the boys in the reading school went first, the lowest or youngest taking precedence. Then those who were in the writing-school after the same manner, the lowest in the school going first. The boys

of the writing-school wore red feathers in their caps. Then came the boys of the grammar-school, the lowest walking first, and so on ; and then the upper grammar-school, which part of the procession was brought up by the Grecians who walked last. The remaining part of the procession was formed of the mathematical school, still adopting the arrangement of the eldest being last in the procession. These boys carried, each of them some mathematical instrument, and the head boys who came last carried the globes, an honorable, but rather a troublesome burden. The masters followed their respective schools. In this order the boys walked from the school directly to the Royal Exchange, keeping the footpath ; and they waited in the square of the Exchange till the Lord Mayor and his party were ready to join them, and then on a signal being given, they resumed their ranks and returned in the same order, but keeping the middle of the highway. The

Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, and the Sheriffs, and their ladies, and the Aldermen and city Officers and their ladies, followed the procession in carriages; the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs riding in their state carriages. The procession then moved slowly along Cheapside, round the south side of St. Paul's church-yard, down Ludgate Street, and through the Old Bailey to Newgate Street, and then to Christ's Church. For the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress and the rest of the party several pews in the middle aisle of the church were hung with tapestry, and a chair of state was placed for the Lord Mayor at the upper end of a pew opposite the pulpit. It was a fine sight for the boys and for many others, to see the ladies dressed in full court dresses with hoops and feathers, and every possible decoration, walk one by one up the middle aisle of the church, conducted with great formality to their several seats. Prayers were read by the rector of the parish, and

then an anthem was sung by the boys, and after that a sermon was preached by some dignified clergyman, most frequently a bishop. The object of the sermon was of course to recommend and extol the institution of Christ's Hospital, and such other hospitals as were more or less under the government and administration of the Mayor and Alderman of the city of London. And during the delivery of the sermon a pause was made by the preacher, in which interval, the clergyman, who had read prayers, read to the audience an account of the present state of the several charities, such as Christ's Hospital, Bridewell, and Bartholomew's Hospitals. The account so far as regarded Christ's Hospital, stated how many boys had been admitted, and how many discharged since the last report, how many had been sent to the University, and how many to the sea-service. It stated also the number that had died in the course of the year, and the number of boys and

girls at Hertford, and the number of boys in London. After these reports had been read, the preacher continued, and presently concluded his sermon.

Then when the service in the church was over, we went up to our respective wards, and taking of our newest clothes, and putting on our next best, we went out to see our friends. This was indeed but a short leave, for the service at church was seldom over till half-past two o'clock or later; and our ordinary half-leaves commenced at a quarter before one.

ROB. And what was your arrangement on Easter Tuesday? I think that on that day you all went to the Mansion-house?

FATHER. We did so; but the order in which we went was somewhat different. Instead of walking, according to the schools in which we were placed, each ward went separately, attended by the nurse. We went in the same direction as on Monday, only we did not go so far as the Royal Ex-

change, but we went into the Mansion-house, and were first shewn into a large room, which, though of a good size, was but barely sufficient to hold us. Sometimes we waited a long while in this room, and that was by no means very amusing. After we had remained some time in this room, we were conducted to an apartment in which the Lord Mayor was sitting, and in our way there, two officers of the establishment gave each boy as he passed, two buns and a glass of wine. The Lord Mayor then gave each boy a new sixpence. The monitors generally had a shilling, and the Grecians something more. We then made our bow to the Lord Mayor and returned to our church, walking as on the day before in the middle of the highway.

GEO. But is not Cheapside sometimes very dirty; and when it happened to be rainy weather at Easter, how did you manage then?

FATHER. Formerly wet weather was not

so much thought of as it has been of late days; but even then if the weather was very wet, we made the best of our way back, and instead of going round St. Paul's Churchyard and the Old Bailey, we went directly to Christ's Church, by the way of Newgate Street. But I remember once walking round by St. Paul's Church-yard when it rained; and some of us had umbrellas which our friends brought for us; but for the most part, we thought it a piece of fun to be out in the rain. On these occasions, however, we always went into our wards to change our clothes before we went to church.

ROB. Had you the same service at church on Tuesday as on Monday?

FATHER. We had the same service, but there was another preacher. The Lady Mayoress and the rest of the ladies who came with the Lord Mayor and his party on Monday, did not come on Tuesday. The same anthem was sung, and the report

was read as before of the various charities. The church was generally crowded on both days, and there was little, if anything, of the sermon heard by the boys; for the church was in confusion during the whole service, and we were thinking more of our holiday than of the sermon.

GEO. But you had not much of a holiday if you did not go out till half-past two, and had to return by dusk.

FATHER. We had not indeed; but little as it was, it was very agreeable to us. I remember, however, one instance in which even that short holiday was very much shortened by a prodigiously long sermon delivered on Easter Tuesday. The preacher on that occasion, was the celebrated Dr. Parr. In those days there were certain strange opinions circulated, and especially on the subject of benevolence; and Dr. Parr took occasion to controvert and to oppose these opinions, more particularly in reference to the public institutions for edu-

cation in this kingdom. Instead of composing a sermon, therefore, he composed a volume; and instead of preaching about twenty or thirty minutes, he preached an hour and three quarters. It is a remarkable fact that the first words in that sermon are ‘*Enough there is and more than enough.*’ The sermon has been published, and together with a large body of notes, it forms a quarto volume. It happened also on this day, that it had rained hard, and that we had been detained an unusually long while in the Mansion-house; so that we had not our liberty till past four in the afternoon; and when I reached home, I remember saying, ‘they have tried to kill us by three different means, first they attempted to stifle us in the Mansion-house, then to let us be drowned by the rain, and then to starve us by a long sermon, keeping us away from our dinner. And when it is considered that our usual hour for dinner was twelve o’clock, it may easily be sup-

posed that we were pretty well tired of waiting till past four in the afternoon.

ROB. I suppose that the sermon was not very interesting to you.

FATHER. That it certainly was not: for we could not hear a single word of it, and even if we had heard it, not one in a hundred of us could have understood it. Generally, however, the discourses were not so long, and I have a recollection that on the following Easter, when I anticipated another long discourse, I was very much disappointed.

GEO. Agreeably disappointed I suppose.

FATHER. Not exactly so; for I took some trouble, and ran some risk, to avoid the inconvenience of a long sermon, and found after all that my pains amounted to nothing, and that I might have saved myself the trouble.

ROB. How was that?

FATHER. I will tell you. As we were walking from the Mansion-house to the

church on the Easter Tuesday, in the year after this long sermon had been preached, some of us began to talk about the probability and danger of having to undergo as long a sermon on the present occasion. Thereupon in order to avoid that inconvenience, I proposed to faint away just when the anthem was being sung before the sermon, and that three of my school-fellows should carry me down stairs, and then that we should walk off, and so lengthen our holiday. I did so, and was taken out of church accordingly; but as some few of the beadles and others were standing about by the church doors, we were under the necessity of walking very slowly through the cloisters, as if to recover from the fainting fit; but by degrees we moved away from observation, and took our departure. And we were scarcely five minutes' walk from the school before we were overtaken by the rest of our school-fellows; for the sermon was on that day a remarkably short

one ; so I derived no benefit from my stratagem, except that I had another illustration of the proverb, that honesty is the best policy.

GEO. Had you any other public processions or exhibitions besides these walkings before the Lord Mayor, on Easter Monday and Tuesday ?

FATHER. No other except that on Good Friday a certain number of the boys, not many, but I forget the number, went, accompanied by one of the beadles, to All-hallows Church in Lombard-street, where we heard divine service, and afterwards received each of us twopence, and a small parcel of raisins. What was the origin or intention of this, I cannot inform you ; for I find no mention of it in any history of Christ's Hospital that I have seen. But in former times many very curious legacies and bequests have been made, and this is, no doubt, one of them.

ROB. Are there many histories of Christ's Hospital ?

FATHER. In several books there may be found some account of the establishment, and there is one separate work called '*A brief History of Christ's Hospital*,' written by one who was brought up in the school. I have looked into that for some explanation of this visit to All-hallows Church, but I cannot find any.

CHAP. V.

GEO. You have told us a great deal about Christ's Hospital, but have you not more to tell us yet? I think I have heard you once or twice allude to something of a rebellion, or barring out?

FATHER. There was in the ward to which I belonged something of a resistance to authority, and a little disobedience manifested to the nurse and monitors; but the rebellion was soon extinguished, and the ringleader punished.

ROB. Was he expelled from the school?

FATHER. Oh no; the rebellion was not quite serious enough for that degree of severity: it was put down as soon as discovered.

ROB. But will you tell us the particulars as far as you can recollect them?

FATHER. As far as I can remember them I will. Our rebellion, if such it might be called, arose out of, and was occasioned by various grievances. We thought that we were in some cases unjustly used, and debarred of our rights; but instead of making known our grievances, and properly representing them to the constituted authorities, we took upon ourselves to disobey orders. Our grievances were of several kinds. We thought that the monitors assumed too much authority, and demanded too much homage; and we resolved not to yield it.

GEO. What was the particular homage which the monitors demanded?

FATHER. It was expected that the boys when addressing them should not plainly and bluntly say yes, or no; but that they should address them by name. This we thought a piece of arrogance, and it was

one of those things which we determined to resist. Then it was also the practice once during each of the four holidays, Easter, Whitsuntide, August, and Christmas, to make a collection of two-pence a-piece from each boy for the nurse's servant. This we considered an encroachment, and in some cases, it was an actual oppression; for there were several poor, friendless boys, who scarcely ever had any pence of their own. And at Easter, an additional contribution of two-pence each, was made for the nurse's daughter, to pay her for the trouble of marking our caps. Those of us who chose to have our caps marked with our names at full length, were required to pay sixpence for having them so marked. And it was thought very mean, especially among the elder boys, if any one declined having the name at full length. There was, however, one more grievance which was more galling than all the rest, and that was the practice, peculiar I believe

to the ward in which I was placed, of depriving us of our Wednesday evening's play, by insisting on our going into the ward immediately after supper to be washed. Twice a week, on Wednesday, and on Saturday, our heads and shoulders were washed, and this took up a considerable length of time ; so in order to have it over sooner, our nurse used to order us up into the ward an hour or more earlier than the rest of the boys ; and it was this that developed our conspiracy. The scheme had been organised and arranged for some time, by several who were in the grammar-school, and had been by them communicated to others of the same ward who were in the writing school. And so it was settled, that all the discontented should immediately after supper assemble in the grammar-school, and lock themselves in, and not open the door till our grievances were redressed. This notion was derived from one of Miss Edgworth's stories in the *Parent's*

Assistant, ealled ‘Barring out.’ The leader of the conspiracy thus collected thirty-six out of forty-four that belonged to the ward, and having them altogether in the upper grammar-school, he locked the door and took possession of the keys, and made a speech to the conspirators after the manner of the speeches recorded in *Sallust’s history of the Catiline conspiracy*. He professed mighty firmness and confidence ; and for a time kept the door locked against all attempts and entreaties on the part of the monitors of the ward to have it opened. As soon as the monitors had departed, the assembly adjourned to the new play-ground, where they were soon traced by the monitors ; and one by one the conspirators dropped off, and returned from timidity to their wonted obedience, the ringleader only was punished ; for he was betrayed by some of the party. Thus the only attempt that I ever remember of resistance to authority was very feebly sustained, and very effec-

tually suppressed. The grievances, however, of which we complained, were afterwards redressed in a great measure.

ROB. Was that the whole of your rebellion? That was very trifling indeed.

FATHER. In itself it was trifling; but when you consider our general habits of prompt and universal obedience, it will seem an act of great boldness, even to demur for a moment, or to hesitate in the slightest degree to obey the constituted authorities. And it was good for us that we were in such complete subjection, though we did not think so at the time.

GEO. You must have been under very great subjection, if so slight a resistance as you have mentioned could be called a rebellion.

FATHER. It was not called a rebellion; but it was much more than the same kind of resistance would have been in any other institution. You that have been educated at a private school, cannot well form an

idea of the strict and uniform discipline, which it is necessary and usual to keep up in a public school.

ROB. How did you spend those of your holidays in which you had not leave to go out?

FATHER. As far as I can recollect, those days were very wearisome. There are very few who can play all day long. What may be the practice of the boys now I cannot say; but in former days there was not generally much reading. In the course however of the last five and twenty years, many more books have been published fit for young people, and the habit of reading has considerably increased.

GEO. But had you not a task to learn during the holidays.

FATHER. Those of us who were in the Grammar-school had at one time; but I believe it was not a common practice. And it certainly was not a very useful one, situated as we were, because there was no

one who could keep us to our tasks, during the holidays, and we learnt them just when and as we pleased. For the most part we put off learning them till the very day before we went to school, and the wearisomeness of the anticipated labour took away from the pleasure of our days of indolence. Even in the long holidays of August, when we did not go to school for three whole weeks, the task which was given us to occupy a little of each day, we generally left to the last, and though we were wearied of our indolence, yet we had but little appetite for serious labour.

ROB. Did you not sometimes go into the country during the August holidays?

FATHER. When I was in the school, the boys who had been there for three years were allowed to sleep out for three weeks; but as that arrangement was made only for the benefit of those whose parents or friends resided in the country, it was made part of the condition, that no boy sleeping out,

should, during the whole period, be seen within five miles of London : for it certainly would not have been proper that boys should be allowed to be out late in London.

GEO. Had you only three weeks' leave of absence during the whole eight years that you were in the school.

FATHER. That was the arrangement when I was there ; but to me the inconvenience was little or none : for my friends resided so near that I could see them every leave-day ; and I very often had an opportunity of seeing them as they passed through the hospital, which is a thoroughfare, and which, till the late alterations and improvements, was much more of a thoroughfare than it is now. The public have indeed no right to use it as a thoroughfare, it is only so by sufferance of the governors ; and in order to preserve their right, they have the gates closed one day in the year and, that day is generally Good Friday.

ROB. In the holiday time of course you

had some money to spend. Had you not leave to go to the shops in the immediate neighbourhood?

FATHER. In the earlier part of my time we had that liberty, on condition that we left our names on a piece of paper in the hands of the boy who might be appointed to keep the gate out of which we went. We were allowed only to go to those shops which were very near the gates; but even these were out of sight of the watches, as we called them, and so it not unfrequently happened that some daring ones would venture rather further than license was granted them. They knew, however, that they were in danger of being seen by some of the officers connected with the establishment, and therefore, when they ventured beyond bounds, they seldom trusted themselves in the public streets. It was considered a very pleasant amusement for two of us to take advantage of this license, and go some distance from home through nar-

row lanes and allies, avoiding the public streets: this we called, going courts and allies.

GEO. What motive could you have for going so among those dirty narrow lanes and courts?

FATHER. The only pleasure was the novelty and the danger. There were some of the boys extremely dexterous at that kind of amusement, and it was found necessary to put a stop to it by not suffering the boys to go out at the gates at all except on leave-days.

ROB. That must have been very mortifying to you. How could you spend your money then?

FATHER. A provision was made for that by the establishment of shops within the bounds. These shops were kept by the beadles, and they supplied us with fruit, and ginger-bread, and tops, and marbles, and stationery, and all such articles as boys most frequently spend their pence upon.

But we by no means liked the change ; for there were several luxuries in which we could not indulge, one of these was Irish stew. There was a hair-dresser who lived near the gates, and his wife kept a cake-shop, and furnished us with such luxuries as suited our means and our taste. Besides apples and gingerbread there was every day a mess of Irish stew, composed of mutton and potatoes ; and this mess used to be sold in penny-worths and halfpenny-worths. For a penny we might have a plate of the stew with a little bit of mutton in it, and for a halfpenny we had a small quantity of the potato only with a due allowance of gravy. There were two other shops where we could also have mashed potatoes, and there was another where we might buy hot plum-pudding.

GEO. These seem to be curious things for you to spend your money for.

FATHER. It may appear strange to you ; but it was owing perhaps to the circum-

stance of the regularity and uniformity of our diet; so we were pleased with any thing of a change. There was also another shop where we used to make frequent purchases, and that was an oil shop, as it is called: there we used to buy pickles and vinegar and mustard, on the days when we had meat for dinner, and even on Sundays when no other shops were open we had leave to go there and buy pickles. But what we most of all missed, on being prohibited the use of the shops in the neighbourhood of the Hospital, was the opportunity of baking.

ROB. The opportunity of baking! What could you want to bake?

FATHER. During the holidays, on the days that were not leave-days, we used to amuse ourselves with composing several dishes, the principal of which was a mess of bacon and potatoes. The potatoes were cut in slices, and peppered and salted, and then a slice of bacon was laid on the top,

and they were all baked together in a tin dish borrowed of the baker. Sometimes we did without the bacon, sending only a dish of potatoes with a piece of butter upon them. We also used frequently to make meat-pies. Two or three would club together and save their meat, which they carried out of the Hall in their pockets, and then by the contribution of a few pence each, some flour and butter and pepper and salt were procured, a dish was borrowed and the paste was rolled out upon the step of a door and something of a mess was composed which we called a pie. It was not the most delicate that could be imagined, but it answered our purpose exceedingly well. One or two of the boys, I remember, were very clever and apt at the composition of these pies; and they made the crusts in a style of ornament, which would have done credit to an experienced cook.

GEO. You seem to have had plenty of amusement then for your holidays, if you employed yourselves in cooking.

FATHER. This was not, I believe, a very universal practice, but it was at one time common enough to be notorious. Boys are not very particular as to the times of their eating, and frequently they have greater relish for any thing out of the ordinary meal times. They also are very partial to any thing unusual.

ROB. Did you ever keep live animals, such as rabbits or birds?

FATHER. I have no recollection of rabbits, but I remember very well that the boys at one time kept birds in very great numbers, and very likely without intending it, tormented the poor animals miserably. The birds usually kept were hedge-sparrows, that were brought to the gates by vagrants. The usual price given for them was a penny or three half-pence, according to the demand, or the means of the purchasers. The poor birds were kept in boxes, fitted up as well as might be: some of these boxes were larger than an ordinary cage; and some of the boys were very in-

genious in fitting them with wire windows and troughs, and such accommodations. The birds by their confinement were soon rendered tame enough to eat out of the hand : and they were taught to fly from the hand to a hole in the wall, and back again ; their wings of course were clipped to prevent their flying away. When a little bird had been thus tamed, and trained and accommodated with a cage, it would fetch a very handsome price. I recollect also that a white mouse was considered a great curiosity, and a desirable possession ; but the passion for keeping live creatures very much abated, even while I was in the school ; and I suppose by this time, it is altogether done away with.

GEORGE. But were people suffered to bring anything to sell to the boys ?

FATHER. These birds I remember were brought ; but that was at the time when we were permitted to go to the shops in the neighbourhood of the school. After-

wards, when shops were established in the Hospital, this permission was not granted. There was in particular one man whom we missed very much. We used to call him Monk, whether that was his proper name or not, I cannot tell. He was in the habit of coming almost every day, and he carried a large tin apparatus, in which he had a collection of hot apple, and mutton-pies, which we thought the most delicious that could be made. Articles of this kind ~~could not be procured~~ could not procure in the shops within the bounds of the Hospital. On our holidays when we had leave to go out, we frequently met him, and seldom omitted to become purchasers, if we had the means. I have often seen him since I left the school; he was a singular-looking man, and for the most part very chatty and good-humoured. The boys seemed to have an affection for him, and when he was allowed to come into the play-ground, he was generally surrounded by a cluster of his old acquaint-

ances, not merely for the sake of purchasing his goods, but for a little talk and gossip. It is many years since I last saw him, he was then aged and broken down, his apron was not so white as it used to be, and his coat was more greasy, his good-humoured smile was gone, and his tin cannister or portable oven was black and battered, and was quite a burden to him; the basket also which he carried on his right arm to receive the emptied tins, in which his pies were baked, looked dirty and almost empty. He looked altogether like a common pie-man. I pitied him, and was almost inclined to be a customer again, but I was then too much of a man to eat mutton-pies in the street, so I passed him without speaking, and I have not seen him since.

ROB. And did you never hear anything more of the poor old man?

FATHER. I have a recollection that I heard that he was one of those who lost their lives in the crowd that was assembled

to witness the execution of two murderers, who were hung in the Old Bailey, about twenty years ago.

GEO. As your school was so near the Old Bailey, you might sometimes see these executions.

FATHER. Never. The boys were absolutely prohibited from the sight, and as far as I can recollect, they had not the slightest wish to be spectators of such a scene. Sometimes it happened that there was an execution on the morning of one of our whole-day leaves, and when it did so happen, we were not permitted to go out till it was all finished, and every thing cleared away. Very especial care was taken to keep us out of crowds, and out of the way of mischief altogether. During the time of Bartholemew fair, we were not suffered to leave the gates, except with the especial permission of the steward, and that only for a short distance, and not in the direction of Smithfield, where the fair was held.

ROB. Had you any holidays at all then, during the fair ?

FATHER. No, we had no holidays, but occasionally it might happen that one of the masters would have to send one of us out on some errand, or with some message, and for that purpose would give a ticket ; but even that must be with the knowledge and approbation of the steward. There was also another time at which great care was taken to have us all within ; and that was the evening of Twelfth-day. It not unfrequently happened that during the Christmas-holidays, one of our leaves fell on that day ; and though our usual license in the winter-time extended to six o'clock, yet on the evening of Twelfth day, we were ordered to be home at five.

GEO. And what did you do with yourselves for the rest of the evening ?

FATHER. We went to bed as soon as we came home.

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GEO. Went to bed so early, and without supper?

FATHER. There was always supper provided for us after our leaves, but it was very seldom that any of us took any. Therefore on that day we have sometimes gone to bed at five o'clock, and have lain in bed till next morning at seven. It was rather wearying to some of the bigger boys, but as we generally had a great deal to talk about after a leave, we found plenty of amusement in narrating to each other the adventures of the day. And one reason which frequently led us to decline taking supper when we came home from a leave, was, that we had brought something with us to eat in bed : this was of course not allowable, but it was a very general practice.

And now I think I have told you about as much of the Blue-coat school as I can well remember; and it may serve to give you some idea of the nature of the establishment and the general habits of the boys.

Since my time there have been, as I have observed to you, many alterations in the management of the school, and these alterations have been made for the advantage and comfort of the boys.

ROB. As many of the governors have been brought up in the school, they would understand the tricks of the boys, and so would disappoint and deprive them of many liberties which they used to enjoy.

FATHER. And that is all the better for the boys; for the liberties which they enjoyed, and the tricks which they played, were by no means for their advantage.

GEO. Did you feel much regret, or great pleasure, in leaving the school?

FATHER. I felt neither very strongly. Towards fifteen years of age boys naturally begin to be weary of those restraints that they could bear very patiently between nine and ten. And as we were frequently in the habit of seeing those who had recently left the school, we were desirous

of enjoying the same liberty. The recollection of past days and of past pleasures, naturally attached us to a place where, notwithstanding many annoyances, we had certainly enjoyed ourselves, and where many of us had received such an education as we could not have had without the charitable aid of that institution. There are very few who have been brought up in that school who do not afterwards, especially as they advance in life, regard the place with some degree of affection and respect.

CHAP. VI.

ROB. When your time at the school was expired, notice I suppose was given to your friends.

FATHER. Yes. But there was very little need of notice, for we were generally pretty well aware of the time. Some of the boys amused themselves with keeping a register of the number of days which yet remained for them. Towards the latter part of my time when I had been in the school for nearly eight years, I remember that some boys were admitted who were but just seven years old, and I regarded them with astonishment to think that they were not born when I first entered the school. Eight years then appeared as a very great portion of time.

GEO. It must have been a very great change to you in every respect. You must have felt quite strange in new clothes.

FATHER. It was indeed a great change. The difference of the dress was very striking: and the use of a hat was quite awkward after having been so long in the habit of going bare-headed. You may have observed that the boys in that school have a peculiar manner of walking, which looks not altogether amiss with their peculiar garb. But when they have first left the school and have changed their dress they have a singular awkward appearance.

ROB. Did you after leaving the school continue to visit the place very frequently?

FATHER. Not very frequently: but I still kept up some intimacy with several of my old school-fellows. I was however very happy when I was of age to join in the annual dinner which takes place on the 23rd of October, the birth-day of Edward the Sixth.

GEO. What dinner is that, and where is it held?

FATHER. It is usually held at one of the great taverns in the city. About one hundred, or a hundred and twenty meet upon the occasion. And it is very pleasant to have the memory of one's early days refreshed by meeting again with our old companions.

ROB. I should have thought that you would meet much greater numbers than a hundred and twenty.

FATHER. You very naturally might think so; but you should recollect that those who have been brought up in the school are dispersed in different parts of the kingdom; and this dinner is for the most part attended by those only who live in the city, and are in the habit of meeting one another frequently. The origin of this annual dinner was in a society called '*The Society of Amicable Blues.*' This society consists of a number of individuals who have been edu-

cated in Christ's Hospital, and who are engaged in business in the city of London; and their object in thus uniting together, is for the promotion of each other's welfare, and for keeping up a pleasing recollection of their early days. The annual dinner also is not merely agreeable in itself but it contributes in some measure to the benefit of the establishment; for many have their attention drawn to it, who would otherwise have forgotten it. Of late years especially not a few who received their education in the school have become governors, and it is gratifying to them, at these meetings with their old school-fellows, to recollect that the instruction and the benefits which they received in the venerable establishment has been the means of enabling them to become governors. They have a more especial zeal in favour of the school, and they are continually endeavouring after its prosperity.

There has also arisen another great

benefit from this annual meeting ; that is, the formation of a Benevolent Society for the relief and assistance of such as may through any untoward circumstances have fallen into distress. And though this Society has not existed long, I have heard of several instances in which it has been of singular and great benefit. This Society requires a small annual subscription from each of its members, and it accommodates with a temporary assistance such as need it, and one of its objects is to procure for the children of those who may want it, presentations of admission into the school.

GEO. Then you seem never to forget the institution.

FATHER. There are those who never forget it, and it is mainly owing to their exertions and care that the establishment has not only continued to prosper, but that its prosperity has been continually on the increase. There is almost always some improvement taking place in its management.

ROB. But I have heard it said that it has been abused.

FATHER. No doubt there may have been instances of that nature, in which the children of those parents who needed not the assistance have had the benefits of the institution. But the cases are far from numerous, and they have been very much exaggerated; and while such cases have been made a matter of complaint as being an abuse, many benefits have arisen to the school from them. The establishment is not altogether designed, nor is it entirely calculated, for the children of the poorest class in the community; it was originally designed for the orphans of citizens, and afterwards its advantages were extended to others. I think I cannot better conclude my account of the school than by reading you an extract from a poem on Christ's Hospital, written by one who had received his education there.

After having mentioned with honour

.

those who first engaged in the formation of the establishment, he thus writes:—

Such was the rise of this august design
Of prospect boundless and of aim divine :
On this foundation gradually arose
The noblest structure Britain's empire knows.
Though England long has been the honour'd seat
Of Charity, her lov'd and fixed retreat,
Yet one proud fabric on this favour'd isle,
Boasts a superior interest in her smile ;
It boasts that there she has display'd a grace,
Beyond the muse's amplest pow'rs to trace :
Boasts that within the circle of its walls
Want's power ceases, and woe's sceptre falls :
Boasts of the wond'rous blessings there bestow'd,
Which help the helpless on life's thorny road ;
Which waken industry — which scatter lore —
Stamp virtue's image on the mind's rich ore —
Which foster genius, and aid its rise
From want's cold region to its native skies.

It was Matilda's happy lot to prove
The heart-felt pleasures of connubial love.
Long on life's ocean proudly swell'd the sails
Of her gay bark with fortune's fairest gales ;
When suddenly affliction's tempest rose,
And hope's bright scene for ever seem'd to close .
Eight summers had Matilda been a bride,
When every earthly hope with Henry died.

Lo ! the pale mourner ! her dishevell'd hair,
And frantic gestures speak her soul's despair.
' He's gone,' she screams, ' they've laid him in
the grave,
His wife's, his children's pray'rs have fail'd to save ;
Oh, hapless orphan ! oh, my darling boy !
Buried is every hope of future joy :
Cold want shall chill the powers of thy soul,
Or vice allure them under its controul.
The hand that should direct thine arduous way
To virtue's goal, is cold and lifeless clay.
Go burst the portal of thy father's tomb,
And seek thine only shelter in its womb.'

While yet she speaks, she hears a seraph voice,
In soothing accents whisper, ' Hail, rejoice !'
She turns, she gazes with a pleasing awe
Upon the fairest form the world e'er saw.
'Tis Charity array'd in sweetest smiles,
With countenance that keenest grief beguiles.

' Widow,' she cries, ' this child of want be mine :
Not to the tomb, to me your boy resign :
To Edward's friendly dome his steps I'll lead ;
There, shelter'd from the deadly blights of need,
Transplanted in that health-inspiring soil,
This bud of sorrow, shall hope's blossom smile ;
Shall, foster'd by instruction's timely care,
The fruit of active merit early bear.
And tho' midst weeds of woe its growth began,
Shall ripen into virtuous, happy man.'

O Muse, this is no visionary theme,
No charm of fancy, no poetic dream :
Such soothing sounds to many a drooping heart
The cheering cordial of hope impart ;
And many a smiling evidence appears,
Whose morn of life foreboded only tears.

Mark now the stripling his first thoughts employ
On his new liv'ry as a Blue-coat Boy !
Matilda views him with a mother's eyes,
Joys that he stays, and yet to leave him sighs ;
Till he, of his new privileges proud,
Flies from her arms, and joins the sportive crowd.
Then grateful, sorrowful, she bends her way,
Cheer'd with hope's vision of a future day ;
Which gilds the ev'ning of her life with joy,
When he whom now she leaves a helpless boy,
Mature in years, and virtues shall arise
To soothe the cares of age, and close her peaceful eyes.

Now with a fairy step, pleas'd fancy strays
O'er the sweet vision of my boyish days,
And follows him thro' each succeeding school
Where rigid justice holds impartial rule ;
Where no rich dunce can rise on bags of gold,
Nor meed of merit can be bought or sold.
Where, as the youthful mind its bias shews,
With dulness freezes, or with genius glows,
Its native powers are to science train'd,
'Till learning's highest summit is attain'd.'

Or, to pursuits of humbler aim confin'd,
The track is follow'd, nature has design'd.
No barrier crosses emulation's plain,
But simply to deserve is to obtain.
Fancy pursues him in his boyish sports,
And strolls to all his holiday resorts :
When summer sun-beams tremble in the wave,
View him the river's depth courageous brave :
Or, when hoar frost congeals the flowing tide,
Swift o'er its icy bosom see him glide.

But chief I love in fancy to repair,
On Sabbath-ev'ning to the hall of pray'r.
O ye within whose bosom warmly glows,
A heart, that pitying, throbs for human woes ;
A heart, that swells with grateful, joyful sense,
When Mercys smiles on hapless innocence.
Oh hither bend your steps, here raptur'd gaze
On living monuments of Edward's praise !
Here view, beneath one roof, the num'rous train
Of sorrows offspring, bounty's stores maintain !
Here view on orphan's brows contentment's air,
The smile of innocence devoid of care !
A band of brothers ! scions of one stock,
In the world's wilderness, a helpless flock ;
Whom mercy shelters on this hallow'd ground,
From want and woe and vice, which prowl around !
Now mark the sacred duties of the place,
Their youthful priest recites the word of grace,

And offers up to heaven the word of pray'r
For those who make the orphans' woes their care.
Now the loud notes of gratitude arise,
And mingle with the chorus of the skies.

Hail ! scene unrivall'd in the world's wide sphere,
Which God himself approves, and men revere.

When cheerful spring succeeds to winter's gloom,
'Tis sweet to see the tender branches bloom ;
'Tis grateful to reflect upon the care,
Which screen'd the scions from the nipping air ;
To see that, spite of chilling frosts and snows,
The plant still flourishes, the flower blows.

To the philanthropist on this blest spot,
With conscious joy surveys the orphan's lot.
His bosom heaves with exquisite delight,
To view the mind thus sav'd from serious blight,
Beneath a genial clime its pow'rs unfold,
By vice, by want unsullied, uncontroll'd :
To mark the onward progress of its course
Near and more near, to its eternal source.
Let ancient Greece, with pride triumphant, claim
The works of art and taste which bear her name ;
Busts that with living order seem to glow,
Statues, thro' which life's streams appear to flow.
Let Italy with zealous rapture trace
Her pencil's powers, dignity and grace :
England, thy Edward's works, which grace this dome,
Eclipse the proudest arts of Greece and Rome.

The best wrought statues Athens e'er produc'd,
To scatter'd atoms ages have reduc'd ;
Rome's richest colourings of light and shade,
At ruthless time's unsparing touch shall fade.
But charity's immortal works shall last
Beyond th' Archangel's world-dissolving blast :
The mind she forms, with still expanding ray,
Shines the bright sun of an eternal day.

FINIS.

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